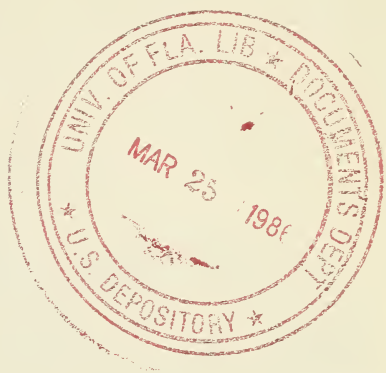


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*92nd Bombardment Wing*

*Sentinel of the  
Pacific  
Northwest*



Colonel James W. Meier  
Commander, 92d Bombardment Wing  
Fairchild Air Force Base, Washington

Colonel Meier was born in Cleveland, Ohio. He received his commission through the Air Force Reserve Officers Training Corps, at Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, in June 1962. He earned a Master's in Business Administration from Pepperdine University in 1974.

A Command Pilot, he has over 3500 flying hours in various aircraft including the B-52, F-4, T-29, T-33 and T-38. His most recent assignments include, Commander, 524th Bombardment Squadron, Wurtsmith AFB, Michigan; Chief, Strategic Operations Division Directorate of Operations, Headquarters USAF; Deputy Assistant Director for Joint and National Security Council Matters, Directorate of Plans, Deputy Chief of Staff, Plans and Operations, Headquarters United States Air Force; and Vice Commander, 416th Bombardment Wing, Griffis AFB, New York.

Military decorations and awards include the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, Air Force Commendation Medal, Combat Readiness Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal.



Colonel William R. Lennard  
92BMW Vice Commander  
Fairchild AFB, Washington

Colonel William R. Lennard was born on 8 October 1942, in Hays, Kansas. He received his Air Force commission and a bachelor of arts degree in international relations from the University of Kansas in 1964. He received a master's degree in political science from Auburn University, N.Y., in 1976. Colonel Lennard is a graduate of Squadron Officer School, Air Command and Staff College (all located at Maxwell AFB, Alabama), and Industrial College of the Armed Forces at Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, D.C.

Colonel Lennard is a senior pilot with more than 4,000 flying hours including over 1000 combat hours. In March 1981, Colonel Lennard was selected to command the 37th Bombardment Squadron, Ellsworth AFB, South Dakota. After graduation from Air War College in May 1983, he was assigned to Headquarters U.S.A.F., Washington D.C., serving as Chief, Strategic Forces Division and Chief, Programs Division, Deputy Directorate for Forces, Directorate of Programs and Evaluation. He assumed his current position in June 1984.



Chief Master Sergeant James I. Hume  
92d Bombardment Wing, Senior Enlisted Advisor  
Fairchild Air Force Base, Washington

Chief Master Sergeant Hume enlisted in the United States Air Force in November 1959. From May 1970 to January 1972, Chief Hume served as a shift supervisor in the Inertial Navigation System Shop, 6th Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, Eielson AFB, Alaska. The Chief was then assigned to Fairchild AFB, as noncommissioned officer in charge, Plans and Scheduling, 92d Munitions Maintenance Squadron, until July 1975. From July 1975 to January 1980, Chief Hume was the missile maintenance supervisor, 509th Munitions Maintenance Squadron, Pease Air Force Base, New Hampshire. The Chief was then reassigned to Headquarters Eighth Air Force, Barksdale AFB, Louisiana, as the missile maintenance superintendent, from January 1980 to July 1983. From August 1983 to August 1985, Chief Hume served as maintenance superintendent, 92d Munitions Maintenance Squadron, Fairchild AFB, Washington. Chief Hume assumed his current duties in August 1985 as Senior Enlisted Advisor.

He was promoted to Chief Master Sergeant on 1 September 1983.



### THE COVER

On 10 September 1985, the 92d Bombardment Wing received its first B-52 "H-model" bomber. The "H" model would soon replace the older "G" models, which were reassigned within Strategic Air Command.

### SAC EMBLEM

SAC's emblem was approved on 4 January 1952. The blue sky is representative of the Air Force operations. The arm and armor is a symbol of strength, power and loyalty, and represents the science and art of employing far reaching advantages in securing the objectives of war. The olive branch, a symbol of peace, and the lightening flashes, symbolic of speed and power, are qualities underlying the mission of Strategic Air Command.

### SAC's MOTTO

PEACE IS OUR PROFESSION

### 92BMW EMBLEM

92BMW's emblem was approved on 21 November 1957. The two-edged broadsword, which portrays the Wing, shows the "Two-edged or two-fold" capability of a heavy bomber wing to maintain the calm, serene skies of peace shown by a light blue sky with white clouds and a green olive branch of peace. Its devastating deterrent capability to restrain the emptiness and bloodshed of war is shown by a black, empty void pierced by the blood-red lightening blot of war.

### 92BMW MOTTO

DUPLUM INCOLUMITATIS - TWOFOLD SECURITY

MISSION STATEMENTS

## SAC

"The Strategic Air Command will be prepared to conduct long range offensive operations in any part of the world whether independently or in cooperation with land and Naval forces; to conduct maximum range reconnaissance over land or sea either independently or in cooperation with land and Naval forces; to provide combat units capable of intense and sustained combat operations employing the latest and most advanced weapons; to train units and personnel for the maintenance of the Strategic Forces in all parts of the world; to perform such special missions as the Commanding General of the Air Force may direct."

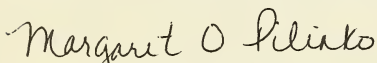
92BMW

"To maintain assigned units in a state of readiness to permit immediate operation against adversaries of the United States. Be prepared to perform tasks assigned in current Emergency War Orders and related operations orders. Train bombardment and air refueling crews and units for the performance of global bombardment operations. Support the Air Reserve and Air National Guard program in accordance with instructions received from Air Force or Higher Headquarters. Assure required support is provided to tenant units."

FOREWORD

This booklet was prepared so that you, the reader, might gain a better understanding of the 92d Bombardment Wing and its past. Although this booklet covers a period of almost half a century, it is not all-inclusive. There are countless documents and historical reports in the Office of History and the Fairchild Base Museum, that tell the stories of the unsung heroes who were assigned to the Wing throughout years past. It is with regret that this booklet cannot mention every name and event that took place within the Wing's glorious history.

The success of the 92d Bombardment Wing can only be attributed to the unselfish attitudes, dedication, and hard work of every officer, enlisted and civilian who were assigned to the unit. To them, "The Sentinel of the Pacific Northwest" is dedicated.



Margaret O. Pilinko, Sgt, USAF  
Wing Historian

"I feel that my responsibility to this country is to make sure we can perform our mission of nuclear deterrence better than any other bomb wing in the Air Force...."

Colonel James W. Meier  
Commander, 92BMW

This booklet concludes activities as of 30 September 1985.



## INTRODUCTION

For over 40 years, the 92d Bombardment Wing has pursued its goal of excellence during both war and peacetime. It has won military honors during both World War II and the Korean Conflict and boasts quite a history as colorful as it is varied. It has operated around the United States as well as around the world and gained distinction as one of the most experienced bombardment wings in the Strategic Air Command.

This brief history offers but a glimpse of the Wing and some of the activities that it has been involved in since its birth during March 1942. It has been divided up into three major parts; the Chronology, the Narrative and a Pictorial History, to provide the reader with "the big picture" of the wing and its basic mission. The pictorial portion tells a story in itself. The photos presented have been found through diligent research and tell the story of the wing by its assigned aircraft and weapon systems. Some are rare combat photos taken during World War II, where the 92d began its rich past.

If you have any questions or comments about the history of the 92d Bombardment Wing "Sentinel of the Pacific Northwest," please contact the Wing Historian at 509-247-2173 or (Autovon) 352-2173.



# CHRONOLOGY

- 1 Mar 1942      92d Bombardment Group activated at Barksdale Field, LA.  
Fairchild AFB activated as Spokane Army Air Field.
- 12 Aug 1942      92d Bombardment Group flies the North Atlantic Route to  
Prestwick, Scotland.
- 28 Aug 1942      92d Bombardment Group assigned to Bovingdon Airdrom,  
England.
- 6 Sep 1942      92d Bombardment Group flies its first combat mission over  
Nazi occupied France.
- 28 Feb 1946      After over 300 combat missions to its credit, the 92d was  
inactivated at Istres Air Field, France.
- 15 Jul 1946      The 92d Bombardment Group is redesignated as the 92d Bomb-  
ardment Group, Very Heavy, and assigned to Strategic Air  
Command.
- 4 Aug 1946      92d Bombardment Group(Very Heavy) activated at Fort Worth  
Army Field, Texas, and assigned to Fifteenth Air Force. The  
92d was also equipped with the B-29 Superfortresses on this  
date.
- 28 May 1948      The 92d Bombardment Group, Very Heavy, redesignated as 92d  
Bombardment Group, Medium.
- 16 Jun 1950      92d Bombardment Group (M) redesignated as the 92d Bombardment  
Group (H).
- 4 Jul 1950      92d Bombardment Group dispatched planes to participate in the  
Korean conflict.
- 12 Jul 1950      92d Bomb Group flew its first mission over Korea after being  
transferred to Guam.
- 25 Oct 1950      The 92d Bomb Group is released from the Korean Conflict and  
redeployed to Fairchild AFB, WA.
- 28 Feb 1951      Due to the re-organization of SAC units, the 92d Bombardment  
Group (H) becomes the 92d Bombardment Wing(H).
- 29 Jul 1951      92d Bombardment Wing equipped with the new B-36 Peacemakers.
- 16 Oct 1954      The 92d Bombardment Wing transferred to Anderson AB, Guam.

18 Aug 1976 Wing participates in Korean Augmentation Operation by helping several fighter aircraft deploy to Korea.

25 Feb 1977 Automated Offset Unit modification completed on all active B-52s.

1 May 1977 SAC transferred responsibility for the 141st Air Refueling Group (Reserve) from the 28BMW to the 92BMW.

16 May 1977 B-52 Engine Conditioning Monitoring Program established.

1 Jul 1977 The 141st Air Refueling Group (Reserve) assumes daily alert duties.

1 Jan 1978 Accelerated Copilot Enrichment operations began (ACE).

5 May 1978 The President of the United States, James Earl Carter, visits Fairchild AFB, WA.

18 May 1980 Mount St. Helens erupts with Fairchild celebrating its Open House, leaving the Wing paralyzed for one month.

22-24  
May 1980 Mount St. Helens erupts again and 92BMW aircraft were deployed to Northern California SAC bases.

19 Oct 1980 A combined USAF/Boeing Air Launch Cruise Missile(ALCM) Site Survey Team visits the wing and measures wing capabilities to support future ALCM deployments.

10 Nov 1981 92BMW participates in GIANT VOICE Bombing/Navigation Competition and Wing Navigator Trophy for Best Tanker Crew.

1 Mar 1982 Both Fairchild and 92BMW celebrate 40th Anniversary.

7 May -  
6 Aug 1983 Moses Lake/Grant County Airport deployment(Busy Moses).

9 Sep 1983 Colonel John R. Allen, Jr., 92BMW Commander, accepts the Wings first Offensive Avionics System/Air Launched Cruise Missile(OAS/ALCM) modified B-52G bomber.

8-10  
Nov 1983 Aircrews of the 92d Bomb Wing participated in the SAC Bombing and Navigation competition. The wing placed fifth out of the 15 competing units.

14 Feb 1984 In an effort to improve base security, Rambo Road, which paralleled the alert aircraft, was officially closed to the public.

21-30  
Mar 1984 The Headquarters SAC Inspector General conducted a ten-day inspection of the Wing and base support units. The Wing received a Satisfactory rating and 76 airmen were recognized as professional performers.

13 Jan 1955	The 92d redeployed to Fairchild AFB.
4 Sep 1956	The 92d Air Base Group activated.
1 Oct 1956	The 92d enters into its official conversion period, converting from B-36s to B-52s.
26 Mar 1957	The 92d receives its first B-52
13 Sep 1957	The 92d Air Refueling Squadron is activated and equipped with KB-29 Tankers.
21 Feb 1958	The KB-29s are replaced with KC-135 Stratotankers.
Sep 1961	Nine Atlas Missile complexes become operational.
15 Feb 1962	The 92d Bombardment Wing (H) becomes the 92d Strategic Aerospace Wing(92SAW).
Nov 1962	The first Hound Dog Missile delivered to the 92SAW.
25 Sep 1964	The 92SAW becomes involved in the Vietnam Conflict by refueling fighters over Southeast Asia.
Mar 1965	The 92SAW supports Young Tigers.
Apr 1965	Atlas Missile complex inactivated.
Oct 1966	B-52s from the 92SAW deployed to Guam to support the Vietnam Conflict.
1 Apr 1968	The 92SAW supports Arc Light bombing missions in the Vietnam conflict.
16 Oct 1971	92SAW converts to B-52G aircraft.
Mar 1972	92SAW participates in Bullet Shot, the stepped up bombing of targets in North Vietnam.
1 Jul 1972	The 92SAW is redesignated the 92d Bombardment Wing(92BMW).
25 Oct 1973	The 92BMW bombers return from Guam and the 92d Bomb Wing is reconstituted at Fairchild AFB.
4 May 1974	The President of the United States, Richard M. Nixon, lands at Fairchild AFB.
25 Nov-	
25 Dec 1975	Second to last aerial refueling in support of Young Tiger. Conducted by Crew R-135 in aircraft 58-0067.

- 9-19  
Jul 1984 The 1st Combat Evaluation Group (1CEVG), Barksdale AFB, Louisiana, conducted an evaluation of the Wing aircrews. The overall rating was Satisfactory and aircrew testing was rated Outstanding.
- 22-27  
Jul 1984 The Headquarters SAC, Wing Security Inspector, conducted a Wing Security Evaluation (WSE) to realistically evaluate the normal day-to-day and advanced security readiness of the Wing. Fairchild received its third consecutive Excellent rating.
- 29 Aug 1984 Colonel James W. Meier assumed command of the 92d Bombardment Wing. Colonel John R. Allen, Jr., was reassigned to Washington D.C.
- 4-14  
Sep 1984 The SAC Weapons Loading Competition was held at Ellsworth AFB, South Dakota.
- Dec 1984 The Fairchild prototype alert taxi gap barrier was tested and approved by higher headquarters. As a result of the Fairchild barrier, other bases within Fifteenth Air Force were directed to implement similar barriers for security enhancement.
- 7 Jan 1985 The Model Installation Program (MIP) was instituted at Fairchild. The program was designed to save dollars and reduce decision-making to the lowest level.
- May 1985 Wing aircrews flew where no B-52 aircrew has been before, beyond 70-degrees North in the Polar region. The polar mission was to test the Global Positioning System and test equipment associated with the modified aircraft.
- 7 Sep 1985 Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, Sam E. Parish was the guest speaker at the 92BMW Enlisted Dining-Out. Over 880 personnel were in attendance.
- Sep 1985 The SAC Weapons Load Competition was held at Ellsworth AFB South Dakota. Although everyone gave there best, wing participants fell short of their first place goal. All was not lost though, because the "Spirit Bell" returned to Fairchild.

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## CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

About twenty minutes by car on U. S. Highway 2, west of Spokane, Washington, sits a strategically critical Air Force installation - - Fairchild Air Force Base. Each day, about 4500 military personnel and 900 civilian employees actively support the defense of this nation by sustaining the base's capability of performing long-range bombardment operations. The base, with its two-mile concrete runway, sprawls over 5300 acres atop White Bluff Prairie, the site of a locally famous indian battle. "Fairchild" is the current name for the installation which began its history in 1941 when the U. S. War Department constructed an aircraft maintenance and supply depot on the site.

The base originally was the answer to the need for wartime repair of military aircraft. The successful operation of the Army Air Corps depended upon a large number of working aircraft that could be quickly and effectively repaired. The supply depot, like other wartime industries, was brought into rapid existence by the urgency of the war. But the depot possessed certain traits that made it significantly different from the others. The depot was not responsible for converting raw materials into furnished products, but rather maintaining existing products. This type of operation did not require large factories or endless production schedules. The depot differed from other war industries in yet another very important way. War industries such as weapon plants or shipyards were temporary in nature. They remained in operation only as long as the need for their product existed. The supply and repair of aircraft, however, became a continuing function as the government realized the value of air power in maintaining a sizeable, prepared military defense.

Spokane's goal in attracting the Depot in the pre-war years, was expansion, and it based its plans on the long-term existence of the war boom industry of aviation; an industry with a future. Here again the term "industry" is misleading. Spokane was not expecting to become another Seattle with its Boeing Aircraft Corporation. It was hoping to become an air travel center for the eastern Washington region and to attract a permanent military installation to boost its economy.

## CHAPTER II

## INLAND EMPIRE GROWTH

The city of Spokane was facing a bright future on its economic horizon in late 1941 despite the imminent approach of a world war. She had just taken some daring steps in an effort to reverse the fiscal downtrend brought about by the Great Depression. Just west of the city, two Army Air Corps bombardment wings and several support units were occupying the newly completed Geiger Field. Seven miles further west, farmers were sowing their last crop of winter wheat on 2400 acres of land that had just been given to the U. S. War Department to serve as a site for an aircraft maintenance and supply depot that would one day become Fairchild Air Force Base. In the span of little more than a year, the civic leaders of Spokane had introduced a substantial military input to the economy of the community while simultaneously assuring the city's position as the air traffic center of the Inland Empire.

The Spokane Chamber of Commerce, acting in the traditional role of promoting economic expansion, began its efforts during the 1930s to enhance the economic picture of the community by supporting increased military involvement with the city. In 1935, aviation supporters of the organization queried a U.S. Congressional party, which was touring the state, concerning the possible construction of an Army Air Corps maintenance and supply depot in the northwest. They learned that General Henry H. Arnold, commander of the Army Air Corps on the Pacific coast, favored Spokane because of its good climate. They were also informed that the War Department would decide the location of the depot and that Salt Lake City, Utah was Spokane's chief competitor. The Congressmen rated Spokane's chances of obtaining the depot at 50-50.<sup>1</sup> Two years later, U. S. Congressman Charles Leavy from Spokane began talks with General Arnold, now Commander in Chief of the Army Air Corps, and General Oscar Westover, Army Air Corps Chief of Staff, concerning defense planning in the northwest. Leavy relayed information from these discussions to the chamber of commerce and it began a program of luring military interests to the city.<sup>2</sup> The program was successful, so successful in fact, that by the end of 1943 there were three military installations in Spokane which employed over 15,000 civilians with a payroll of more than \$30,000,000.<sup>3</sup>

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1 "Air Base Chances are Fifty-Fifty," Spokane Daily Chronicle, Inland ed., October 19, 1935, p. 6, col. 3.

2 "Spokane Affairs," newsletter of the Spokane Chamber of Commerce, March 31, 1947, p. 2, col. 1.

3 Estimates from incomplete manning figures for Ft. George Wright, Geiger Field, and the Spokane Air Depot, "Landing Fields, Washington, Spokane," Army Air Fields, 1939-1942, Record Group 18, File #686, National Archives Building.



The city leaders of 1937 knew that Spokane needed to be made more attractive to the military. Their first step in this direction was to offer the small city airfield, known as Felts Field, for use as an Army Air Corps installation. The offer was made in letters from James A. Ford, managing secretary of the Spokane Chamber of Commerce, and Frank Sutherlin, Mayor of Spokane.<sup>4</sup> The War Department sent a board of officers to Spokane to evaluate the field. Their report noted that there were no paved runways and a number of flying schools held operational leases against the field. Despite these distractions, the board recommended acceptance of the offer.<sup>5</sup> General Arnold did not favor the Spokane offer and advised against approval to the Army Adjutant General.<sup>6</sup> By the end of September 1940, the city had learned that Felts Field was not acceptable.<sup>7</sup>

The city, however, was not disappointed. The War Department did accept its alternate plan. The city was just beginning construction on a new "super-airport" west of town. The municipal county of Spokane purchased 1280 acres for the purpose of building an airport that would surpass Felts Field and become an improved location for commercial air travel. The county had invested \$46,000 in buying the land and planning the project.<sup>8</sup> The Works Progress Administration(WPA) approved funds for the construction during the summer of 1940. At the same time the offer of Felts Field was made to the War Department, the city also made the same offer for its new "Sunset Airport."<sup>9</sup> As before, the board of officers recommended acceptance. This time the government was in agreement and arranged in December and January to assume control of the construction. The Army would now have a field to suit its own specifications and the city would gain a large military installation and the accompanying economic benefits, not the least of which was a promise of \$200,000 from the Civil Aeronautics Administration to improve Felts Field for commercial use.<sup>10</sup>

So intent was the city on obtaining a military presence in Spokane, they leased the new field to the government for one dollar a year and accepted the demand of the government against both military and civilian usage of the field. The city realized the importance of accommodating the government when it learned that a similar airport agreement in Boise, Idaho was refused by the government because the city wanted dual occupancy.<sup>11</sup>

4 Mayor Sutherlin to General Yount, July 9, 1940, "Landing Fields, Washington." Titles, RG 18, File #601, NAB.

5 Board of Officers Report, July 17, 1940, RG 18, File #686, NAB.

6. General Arnold to U. S. Army Adjutant General, September 3, 1940, RG 18, File #601, NAB

7 General Arnold to Army Chief of Staff, September 19, 1940, RG 18, File #601, NAB.

8 "Sunset Airport Under Way Soon", The Spokesman-Review, January 7, 1939, p.1, col. 2.

9 James A. Ford to General Yount, July 9, 1940, RG 18, File #686, NAB.

10 "Spokane Affairs", January 3, 1941, p. 2, col. 2.

11 "Air Corps Gives Boise Ultimatum," Spokane Daily Chronicle, May 23, 1941, p. 5, col. 7.

The value of this sole occupancy arrangement became even more evident when war began. The Army was able to increase the acreage of Geiger Field\* which it had just purchased from the city for one dollar and to expand its operations without hinderance from civilian air carriers.

The efforts of the city did not go unrewarded. The local construction firm of Clifton & Applegate and Georg was awarded a 1.5 million dollar contract to construct 110 buildings on the site while the army and WPA completed the runways.<sup>12</sup> In ten months the work was completed and the Army Air Corps had two bombardment groups, five engineering units, and a variety of administrative and supply personnel, including an air corps band in the Spokane area.<sup>13</sup> The patriotic action of donating the field to the Army became a wise investment. Three years after the war ended, the War Department returned the field to the city with improved runways and aircraft control equipment. The property added by the Army after the sale remained under the control of the government and was later to house a variety of Air National Guard units. These units were a significant contribution to the Spokane economy. In 1948 the 60th Air National Guard Wing alone spent nearly \$700,000 in Spokane in the form of wages and local contracts. Geiger Field served as a home to a number of naval and army units during the post war years, all of which added to the military contribution to the economic welfare of the Spokane community.<sup>14</sup>

Inspired by the success of Geiger Field, the chamber of commerce increased its efforts in the direction of securing an Army Air Corps supply depot. Information from Representative Leavy in early 1941 indicated that the War Department was still considering the placement of a depot in the Northwest. From his description of the government plans, the depot would certainly be worth the effort to obtain and the chamber set about to obtain it.

For the community of Spokane in the summer of 1941, the decision by the U. S. War Department to locate a twenty million dollar aircraft maintenance and supply depot in their city would have all the qualities of a god-send. The installation was expected to produce over 8 million dollars a year in wages by employing nearly 6,000 civilians to perform maintenance and handle supply items. The construction of the facility and nearby housing required for the military personnel assigned would be a significant boost to the local economy. Such an installation would also attract new families to the Spokane area and offer educational opportunities for those interested in skilled labor. The many advantages of the depot

12 Construction Completion Report for Geiger Field, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Airfield Construction, RG 77, File #33,NAB.

13 Historical records of Geiger Filed for 1942, National Archives Microfilm Files, 283-40-1-V.101.

14 "Spokane Affairs," January 3, 1949, p. 2, col. 2

\* Sunset Airport was renamed by the Army in accordance with its policy of honoring deceased military personnel by naming installations for them. Major Harold Geiger died in an aircraft accident in 1927. The city of Spokane suggested several names of aviators from the Spokane region who had given their lives during World War I. Why the name of Geiger was chosen is not clear, but he was a West Point roommate of the commanding officer of Ft. George Wright in Spokane, Colonel John Curry.

complex, which would affect every segment of the community, were made very clear to the town's citizenry and these citizens worked through the chamber of commerce to obtain a favorable decision from the War Department.<sup>15</sup>

The degree of diligency the people of Spokane applied to their bid for the depot was encouraged by more than their desire to improve the economic picture of the city. Spokane was not the only area contending for the installation. The town of Everett, Washington, located on the west coast, was also interested in obtaining the facility. Competition between the industrial and commercial west and the agricultural east had long been an element in the growth picture of the state of Washington. The location of this defense complex would be yet another area in which the interests of the two factions would conflict. Both communities possessed certain characteristics that favored locating the depot in their regions. Everett was situated near the Army Air Corps installation of McChord Field which allowed for easy transportation of damaged and repaired aircraft between locations. The proximity of coastal seaports made it easier to transport aircraft by ship to and from Alaska. Another plus for Everett was the Boeing Aircraft plant in Seattle which would facilitate shipment of parts and provide an abundant skilled labor force.<sup>16</sup> Spokane boasted the same strategic factor of being located in the Northwest, but stressed the security of being 300 miles inland, safe from possible enemy air attack. To overcome the distance to the coast, Spokane gained the support of the great Northern Railroad in providing priority shipping schedules and equipment as well as full cooperation in constructing new rail lines to meet the needs of the depot. Spokane claimed better climatic conditions by having considerably fewer overcast or fogbound days than the coast.<sup>17</sup>

Each city had its own advocate in Washington D. C. presenting its respective claims to the War Department. Everett had the third youngest U. S. Representative, just recently elected to Congress, in the person of Henry M. Jackson. During the spring of 1941, Jackson, along with Snohomish County Commissioners, suggested to the War Department that Everett was the best location for the depot. The Congressman apparently felt that the agency was in agreement with him, because he planned to make an announcement concerning the selection of the depot site on August 2nd in Everett. The community, in anticipation of a favorable announcement, organized a celebration which was to include a motorcade from Everett to Paine Field, the proposed site, where Jackson was to make his "special announcement." On the scheduled day, however, Jackson notified his Seattle office that he was not able to make the trip. He had been involved in an aircraft accident which left him battered and bruised and unable to make other travel arrangements. He postponed the trip indefinitely and made no mention of the depot site selection.<sup>18</sup>

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15 Chamber of Commerce pamphlet, Sept 15, 1941, Spokane Public Library.

16 Seattle Post-Intelligencer, July 30, 1941, p. 1; August 1, p. 1.

17 "Spokane Affairs," May 12, 1941, P. 2, col. 2.

18 Everett Herald, July 30, 1941, p. 1, col. 3.

Spokane's man on the scene was Representative Leavy who worked in close association with James Ford. As the Geiger Field project was nearing completion, Leavy and Ford were in the nation's capitol presenting the city of Spokane as a candidate for the supply depot. Mr. Ford had prepared a comprehensive brief which listed the advantages of Spokane and outlined the steps the city would take to obtain the installation. Perhaps the most important of these steps was providing the requested 1500 acres for the War Department at no cost to the government. Additional provisions included the arrangement of office space for the various military units while construction on the site was being performed.19

There was no clear indication of when the War Department would make site selection, but before the decision could be made, on-site inspections would have to be conducted by government officials. Several high ranking military men visited Spokane during the spring of 1941. The list of visitors included Major General John F. Curry, Headquarters Commander of 2nd Air Force which was stationed at Ft. George Wright in Spokane. Lieutenant General Delos C. Emmons, Commander of General Headquarters, Air Force, made an inspection of Geiger Field in late May. On June 9th Major General Howard Brett, Chief of the Army Air Corps, visited with the civic leaders of Spokane and indicated that "future expansion of Air Corps operations would be made" in the area. Three colonels from the Air Corps Buildings and Grounds Section and the Supply Depot Section accompanied General Brett. Finally on June 23rd General Carl Spaatz, Assistant Chief of the Army Air Corps, was hosted by the chamber of commerce at one of its weekly luncheons. During the luncheon the chamber assured the General of full civic cooperation with military plans for the region.

Perhaps the first visit to Spokane for the express purpose of viewing the proposed site was made by Colonel Beverly Dunn on July 22nd. Colonel Dunn represented the Air Corps department of Buildings and Grounds and was in Spokane with General Brett the previous month. In less than a week's time, an Air Corps engineering team arrived to investigate the availability of water and electricity for the site which was located about seven miles west of Geiger Field.20

Similar visits were made to Everett at about the same time. The results of these visits were not as productive. On July 17th General Brett suggested that the Everett site would serve well as an aircraft fighter-interceptor base. Colonel Arthur Wilson, an aide to General George Marshall, Army Chief of Staff, visited Paine Field in late July and was in favor of locating the supply depot there. He told Everett officials, however, that he was only able to report his findings and make recommendations based upon his firsthand experience. The final decision would come from the general staff of the War Department.21

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19 James A. Ford to General Arnold, July 9, 1941, RG 18, File #686, NAB

20 "Spokane Affairs," June 9, 1941, p. 3, col. 1.; Spokesman Review, July 22, 1941, p.1, col. 5.

On the last day of July, when Representative Jackson informed Everett that he had a special announcement concerning the supply depot, Representative Leavy informed his co-worker, Ford, in Spokane that the city was still in contention for the depot. Leavy maintained that the final decision had not been made and that it was likely to take at least an additional month.<sup>22</sup> This information was in agreement with a letter James Ford received from General Arnold only a short time before.<sup>23</sup> Leavy's position was further supported by the arrival of 16 Army engineers who performed seismographic studies and collected subsoil data on the Spokane site on August 3rd.<sup>24</sup> This type of preliminary study indicated that the decision was still pending and kept up the expectations of the city.

The people of Everett had been receiving conflicting opinions as to the possibility of being chosen for the supply depot all summer. A Washington, D. C. columnist, John Kelly, had reported in the middle of July that Spokane would be the likely site, based upon a lack of interest in western Washington by the War Department.<sup>25</sup> In mid-August he quoted both Jackson and Representative Warren Magnuson as stating that Everett would be selected. However, he went on to mention that such a decision would go against military planning boards who maintained that the west side of the state was definitely out of contention.<sup>26</sup>

Some members of the military did not apparently agree with Kelly. General Brett favored the Everett site in June of 1941 and General John Curry, who would soon become the commander of the air depot, recommended Everett to General Arnold.<sup>27</sup> Based upon General Arnold's disfavor of the Felts and Geiger Fields, he may not have been too pleased with the Spokane site. Positions such as these tend to indicate that military opinion was

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22 Spokesman Review, August 1, 1941, p. 1, col. 5.

23 General Arnold to James Ford, July 24, 1941, RG 18, File #686, NAB.

24 Spokesman Reveiw, August 3, 1941, p. 1, col. 3.

25 Everett Herald, July 16, 1941, p. 1, col. 3.

26 Ibid., August 13, 1941, p 1, col. 3.

27 General Arnold to Army Material Divison, June 7, 1941, RG 18, File #686, NAB; General Curry to General Arnold, July 1941, RG 18, File #686, NAB



not the sole criteria for the decision. There can be little doubt that political considerations entered into the decision making process. The offices of Leavy and Jackson were actively supporting their respective constituents and they served as the lines of communication between the cities and the capitol.

The fear of too much political intervention was a real one for Spokane. When Representative Jackson declared he had an announcement concerning the depot, Washington Senator Mon C. Wallgren stated that he was in support of the Everett site. The citizens of Spokane were distressed. Both of the Washington Senators were from the west coast. Wallgren had promised, when elected, to represent Eastern Washington. His position on the depot was clearly a breach of promise. Spokane flooded Wallgren's desk with telegrams protesting his stand and asking him to leave politics out of the matter.<sup>28</sup> Had the citizens of Spokane known the whole situation, they would not have been so adamant against political influence on the question.

Despite the military favoring Everett and the fact that Everett had made a better offer to the War Department by offering a free water supply, the political forces of Washington, D. C. favored Spokane. One of the major efforts in overcoming the devastation of the depression was the priming of economic pumps by supplying funds to local communities for the purpose of providing employment on improvement projects. The WPA work on Geiger Field was an example of this policy. This fiscal support went to communities where the need was the greatest and where there was limited federal involvement in existence. The military planning boards did not favor the Everett site because McChord Field, Fort Lewis, and the Boeing plant represented a sizeable federal investment in a community that was in better financial condition than Spokane. The politics of national economic stability as well as the hard sell of Spokane by Leavy and Ford helped Spokane in its fight for the depot.

When Representative Jackson cancelled his trip to Everett in August, the Spokane press published additional details concerning the incident in an effort to bolster the dimming hopes of the city. The airline involved was Penn Central and it recorded that Jackson's flight did develop propeller trouble immediately after take-off and quickly landed. The airline reported that there were no casualties or injuries listed and that a second aircraft was substituted and the flight completed. No explanation was given as to why Jackson failed to take the second aircraft. Perhaps the eagerness of the novice national legislator made him over zealous to please his constituency. It was certainly clear that he had no announcement to make concerning the supply depot.<sup>29</sup>

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28 "Wallgren's Air Depot Stand Shocks Spokane," Spokane Daily Chronicle, July 31, 1941, p. 1, col. 3.

29 Spokane Daily Chronicle, August 2, 1941, p. 1, col 3.

On 12 September 1941 the War Department made the official announcement that Spokane had been selected as the depot site. The town learned of the decision from Leavy two days before and was already in a state of jubilation.<sup>30</sup> The War Department had chosen Spokane because of its strategic inland location and better climate; the air route to Alaska offered better weather, and the site was closer to the eastern suppliers of instruments and spare parts. The condition of the site, which presented no obstacles to early and expeditious construction, was also a contributing factor to the decision.<sup>31</sup> The board found several reasons against choosing Everett. The two major concerns were the need to construct several miles of railroad over difficult terrain and the undesirability of adding the depot installation to a field which would have a full fighter group already in place.<sup>32</sup>

The west coast tenaciously held on to its hope that the final decision had not been made. On the same day Leavy announced that Spokane had been selected, the Everett press ran a story which maintained that the War Department was still in deliberation over the question.<sup>33</sup> It was not until a week later that the Everett newspaper printed a story revealing Spokane's victory. In an attempt to save the town's feelings, the paper printed this information in an interview with Senator Wallgren, who used the opportunity to announce that Everett was still in contention for a supply outlet, albeit smaller in scale than the one planned for Spokane.<sup>34</sup>

Back in Spokane, the chamber of commerce had begun a fund drive among the citizens and businesses of the city to raise money necessary for purchasing the farm land. This money would acquire parts of 12 individual farms which bordered the Galena railroad acreage and would begin the transformation of the economic future of the city of Spokane.

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30 "Spokane Gets \$20,000,000 Air Depot," Spokane Daily Chronicle, September 10, 1941, p. 1, col. 8.

31 General Spattz to Henry Stimson, September 10, 1941, RG 18, File #601.

32 Ibid.

33 Everett Herald, September 12, 1941, p. 1, col. 3.

34 Ibid., September 19, 1941, p. 3, col. 2.



## CHAPTER III

## LAND ACQUISITION

In the fall of 1941, the Spokane Chamber of Commerce was faced with one of its greatest challenges since its beginning in 1893. Thanks to the efforts of men like James Ford, the city was now about to embark on the "largest single development project in Spokane's history." The city had met nearly all of the government's requirements. There was enough land, it was strategically located, a plentiful labor force was readily available, materials were easily obtainable, and the climate was favorable. There was, however, one requirement left to be fulfilled. The War Department specified that the land for the depot would have to be given to the government cost free. This meant that the city of Spokane would have to supply the necessary funds to purchase the property from donations by businesses and private citizens.

The chamber set a goal of raising \$110,000 to cover the cost of the land and any unforeseen contingencies. The sum was based on the proposed purchase of 1500 acres, which complied with the Army's initial request. The city appraised over 3200 acres of the proposed site and considered the sum to be raised as adequate to cover the cost of additional acreage should the government request it. This proved to be a wise decision because the Army almost immediately requested an additional 900 acres "to meet the needs of the rapidly expanding Air Corps".<sup>35</sup>

In order to raise this money the chamber of commerce had to "sell" the depot to the city. A brochure extolling the advantages of acquiring the proposed installation and requesting the whole-hearted support of the town's citizenry was circulated. Increased population, wages, jobs and tax revenues were highlighted. While all of the economic advantages of this endeavor were stressed, the fact was not overlooked that this installation would become an important addition to the defenses of the nation and contributing to it would be considered a patriotic act. With war raging off both shores of the country, bettering the defending posture of the nation became an urgent matter, one that required rapid action. To slacken support and impede this needed effort could only be regarded as a lack of patriotism.

By the very nature of its organization the chamber of commerce was the only group capable of accomplishing the rapid fund-raising project. The members of the chamber were made keenly aware of the business opportunities available in establishing the depot. The Army installation was accurately presented as an attractive investment that promised both short and long-term returns. This clearly was a business proposition that should be handled by businessmen, and the most adept businessmen of the community belonged to the chamber. The board of trustees of the chamber selected two chamber members to direct the fund raising campaign. The men, William H. Ude and Charles Hebbard, were chosen partly because each had at one time been president of the chamber and, more important,

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<sup>35</sup> "Air Corps Depot May Be Larger Than Expected," Spokane Daily Chronicle, September 13, 1941, p. 1, col. 2.

and, because they had worked together in 1923 to raise over \$200,000 for the city's first Community Chest.<sup>36</sup> This was considered valuable experience to be used in collecting a similar sum in 1941. These men divided the membership of the chamber into "divisions", each with a "colonel" who led his men in their effort to raise a portion of the sum. The divisions more or less followed the pattern of the chamber's membership drive committees, which were formed annually to increase the ranks of civic supporters. Once selected, the members were tasked to contact businesses and individuals throughout the city and surrounding regions and seek their contributions.

The strategy of the campaign was two-fold. First the patriotic need to better the nation's defenses was stressed. The significance of Spokane's strategic northwest location was used to emphasize the responsibility of the citizens to do what they could to protect their own as well as their neighbors' homes. The second aspect of the appeal dealt with business and this was by far the more successful approach. A full 75 percent of the contributors were business concerns. There can be little doubt that the majority of these were members of the chamber and therefore had an additional reason for contributing in the form of supporting the organization. But for some, there was yet a stronger reason for helping to assure the establishment of the depot. One out of eight donors represented some aspect of the building trades. These businesses knew that the material and labor to be used in constructing the depot would come from local sources. This was particularly good news for the recently depressed building trades economy of the Spokane region.<sup>37</sup>

The wisdom of supporting the project can be seen in the cases of the Washington Water Power Company and the construction firm of Clifton & Applegate and Georg. The former made a substantial contribution of \$10,000 to the fund drive. When the depot reached full operation, it was estimated that the WWP would be supplying 1,500,000 gallons of water a day to the depot at a cost of \$5,000 a month. This equaled a two-month return on the initial investment and did not take into consideration the electricity that the company supplied.<sup>38</sup> Clifton & Applegate and Georg made a contribution of \$1,000 and, following in its own footsteps at Geiger Field, was chosen as one of the prime contractors for the construction of the depot.<sup>39</sup> The business community of Spokane was eager for this much needed boost and they were not about to let the opportunity of a lifetime slip through their fingers for lack of funds.

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36 Spokesman Review, September 16, 1941, p. 1, col. 3.

37 List of contributors contained in the files of the Spokane Chamber of Commerce

38 Spokesman Review, July 22, 23, 1941, p. 1, col. 3.

39 Spokesman Reveiw, February 6, 1943, p. 5, col. 1.

The official fund raising began at a chamber sponsored luncheon at Spokane's Davenport Hotel. The date was September 16, 1941, just four days after the War Department had announced Spokane's selection. There was an air of excitement and urgency at the luncheon. The money had to be collected as soon as possible and given to the government. The government would then purchase the land, using the right of eminent domain to keep the cost to a minimum. The need was for cash. Pledges could not buy property. Any delay in the purchasing of the land might alter the government's decision. Earlier that year, the government was forced to select an alternate site for a depot which was to be located in the Deep South. The designated city was unable to deliver the ready cash in time for construction to begin in accordance with the Army's schedule. It was imperative that Spokane did not repeat that mistake.40

From the beginning there seemed little chance that Spokane would fail to raise the sum. The fund raisers had done their job well. The people of Spokane were interested and involved in this effort to secure a sound financial future for their city. By the end of the second day, over \$76,000 had been collected. Nearly 70 percent of the goal had been reached in two days and the chamber had decided on a one week time limit for completion of the project. This response was spectacular and it underscored the desire of the city's businessmen to make the depot a reality. William Ude, one of the organizers of the drive, displayed his faith in the project and his ability to raise money by securing the \$10,000 donation from Washington Water Power. Mr. Ude was a board member of that corporation.41 Another large donor on that first day was former Washington Governor, Clarence D. Martin. He donated \$2,500 to the cause. In addition he gave an ample amount of encouragement and some criticism which was to follow later.

When viewed as a whole, the 571 donors to the fund created a representative cross section of the Spokane community. While the vast majority of the money came from businesses, there were many individual contributors as well. The first unsolicited contribution was made by Charles d'Urbal, a former French teacher at Lewis & Clark High School. His donation was \$5. This lead was followed by his former school which donated \$250 from its activity fund.42

There were several doctors and other professional people on the rolls as well as charitable groups such as the Hutton estate. There was even an owner of the land that made up the site who contributed to the selling of his own property. Approximately 3 percent of the contributors represented financial institutions such as banks and savings and loan corporations. Perhaps they saw the value of an increased population that would come with the depot, people who would need homes and money to buy them. Another 3 percent of the donors were from construction related unions, who, like the companies that employed them, eagerly anticipated the opportunity for a long period of full time work.43

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40 James A. Ford to SSgt Ralph L. Lenord, April 23, 1951, Chamber of Commerce files.

41 Spokesman Review, September 16, 1941, p. 1., col 3.

42 Spokane Daily Chronicle, September 13, 1941, p. 4, col. 3.

43 Spokesman Review, September 18, 1941, p. 2, col. 4.

Before the end of the week, the city had succeeded in raising the required money and considerably more. On September 21, 1941, the chamber deposited \$121,133 with the Washington Trust Company. By the end of the week the sum had risen to \$124,996.77.<sup>44</sup> This amounted to nearly \$15,000 in excess funds that would be made available to the government, should the need arise. At last the job was completed. The chamber had succeeded in having Spokane chosen as the depot site and it handily managed to raise the money needed to consummate the deal. Happily for the citizens of Spokane the chamber's work was not in vain. The expectations for the depot were overwhelmingly surpassed. The government spent over \$25,000,000 in constructing the installation. The civilian work force was more than double the anticipated level. The expected payroll of \$8,000,000 a year was nearly tripled by the fall of 1943.<sup>45</sup> The members of the Spokane Chamber of Commerce had just reason to be proud. Their accomplishment was a monumental asset to the city, and their expanded association with the military had only just begun.

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44 "Spokane Affairs," Annual Report for 1942.

45 Ibid., September 27, 1943, p. 2, col 1.

# CHAPTER IV SITE DEVELOPMENT

The planning for building the depot was coordinated between Major Arthur Nauman of the 2nd Air Force, in Spokane, who was in charge of the Army engineers, and Colonel George Polk, commander of the 2nd Air Force Service Area Command.<sup>46</sup> This organization had the responsibility of operating aircraft maintenance and supply depots in an eleven state region in the Northwest. Actual work at the depot site, which became popularly known as "Galena", had begun before the government assumed ownership of the property in November. Survey crews and soil specialists were completing work on the day of the purchase that had been started earlier in the fall. Their job was to determine the best locations for runways and repair buildings. A month before the court date, the firm of Durrand and Son was awarded a \$9,000 contract to drill wells on the site. Two 80 foot wells were completed in November with the water used for construction.<sup>47</sup> Additional work was not scheduled until after the first of the year when several contracts for grading and building construction would be let.<sup>48</sup> The Army engineers occupied the first completed building in March 1942 as the installation received its first of ten different names, the Spokane Army Air Depot. The installation had been known as the Northwest Air Depot prior to March. This title actually applied to a headquarters unit that was located at Ft Wright. The unit came under the direction of the Service Area Command. The name "Northwest Air Depot" had a semiofficial status and was used by the newspapers and in some military correspondence.<sup>49</sup> However, it was never ascribed to the installation by Army letter or special orders, which were the proper authorities for naming an installation. The first such "legal name", Spokane Army Air Depot, came on March 1, 1942.<sup>50</sup>

There were other names for the depot during the early period. Spokane Air Technical Service Command and Spokane Air Material Command represented organizations that occupied the base. Although these names appeared on the marquis over the main gate, they never were the legal names of the installation. One name, which never appeared over the main gate and certainly was not legal, was perhaps the most frequently used by the civilians who worked at the depot. The name was "Galena," and it was derived from the Great Northern Railroad station that bordered the depot site. How the station gained the name is uncertain. There is a mineral ore composed of lead and silver that is found in the northern Idaho mining regions which bears the name. The Williams family, who began the Hazelwood farm, east of the depot site, in the 1800s, and who later obtained considerable influence in the agricultural region west of Spokane, came from an area in Illinois that was called Galena. The name held its popularity throughout the war years until the Air Force took control of the base in the late 1940s.

<sup>46</sup> Spokane Daily Chronicle, December 3, 1941, p. 1, col. 3;  
Spokesman Review, December 19, 1941, p. 1, col. 2.

<sup>47</sup> Spokane Daily Chronicle, November 18, 1941, p. 3, col. 2.

<sup>48</sup> Spokesman Reveiw, January 27, 1942, p. 1, col. 5

<sup>49</sup> General Arnold to James Ford, July 24, 1941, RG 18, File #686, NAB

<sup>50</sup> Adjutant General Letter, 680.9, March 12, 1942, Army Engineers, Real Estate, Forrestal Building, Washington, D. C.



The railroad depot building retained the name until the summer of 1975 when it received the same name as the base it served. There was also a legal name for the landing field at the depot site which never made it to the main gate. In July of 1942, the Army designated the field as the Spokane Army Air Field.<sup>51</sup>

It took over a year for the construction of the depot to be completed. At its height, in the autumn of 1942, the work force totaled over 2,500 laborers. There were over 60 major civilian contractors involved with the construction, many of whom were from the Spokane area. A total of 262 buildings were erected on the site, one of which, a repair hangar, covered 12 acres. There were over eight miles of railroad track laid throughout the depot site to move supply items in and out of a dozen warehouses that were each over a city block in length.<sup>52</sup>

While overseeing the construction of the depot, the Army was simultaneously creating the organization that would occupy it. Because there were no facilities at any of the three other military bases in Spokane; Geiger Field, Felts Field and Ft. Wright, the depot operations had to be located in downtown Spokane. Fort George Wright, named for the victor of the Spokane Plains Battle, was the headquarters for the 2nd Air Force and housed a number of regular and reserve Army units. During the construction of Geiger Field, two bombardment units and support forces were located at Felts Field.<sup>53</sup> When Geiger Field was completed, a sizeable military establishment of over 5000 personnel had become a permanent feature of the Spokane community. However, with the advent of the war and the supply depot becoming an addition to the military community, the city was to experience a much closer relationship with the military.

Headquarters and administrative branches of the depot began their existence in December 1941 in the Hutton Building, on the corner of Sprague and Washington Avenues. The organization grew so rapidly, that a new location was selected in early 1942 and the offices were moved to 1011 First Avenue. In only four months the headquarters moved again, this time to the four-story Kemp & Hebert Building, on Main and Washington. By this time, the command had grown to such a size that it used all four floors and the basement of its new location, while maintaining the use of two floors of the First Avenue building. The Kemp & Hebert Building remained the headquarters' location until the entire organization moved to the depot in the spring of 1943.<sup>54</sup>

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51 Adjutant General Letter 580.82, July 14, 1942, Army Engineers, Real Estate, Forrestal Building, Washington, D. C.

52 Spokesman Review, February 6, 1943, p. 3, col. 4. and June 13, 1943, p. 3, col. 3.

53 Spokane Daily Chronicle

54 Spokesman Review, May 17, 1942, p. 1, col. 3; July 14, 1942 p. 3, col. 4

Office space was not the only requirement placed on Spokane buildings by the Service Area Command. The early operation of the depot required over 200,000 square feet of warehouse space in the city. The firms of U. S. Rubber, Union Pacific, and International Harvester supplied the area from their vacant holdings. Inventories of over \$1,000,000 passed through these warehouses monthly on their way to be used in completing the depot site. They also served to store aircraft parts that would eventually be transported to the depot site.<sup>55</sup>

The city also provided buildings for classrooms to train the workers who would be performing maintenance on the aircraft at Galena. When the Service Area Command moved from its First Avenue location, the two floors it occupied there were used for training. There were a number of other buildings that provided space for schooling the mechanics, welders and other tradesmen in order to provide a large labor force that would keep the maintenance depot in operation around the clock. The Lowell Public School, at 23rd and Elm in nearby Hangman Valley, was put into service. The Cowley Public School, on Main and Maple, which had been inactive for a decade, opened its doors to students.<sup>56</sup> The Spokane Trade School expanded its operation to accommodate the demand for training space. All of the schools operated on a 24-hour basis in three 8-hour shifts. The civilian training program grew so large that when the Service Area Command vacated the Kemp & Hebert Building, all four floors were used for training. In June of 1943, when the command moved to Galena, it was occupying 44 buildings in Spokane and had approximately 7000 civilian employees, nearly twice the number employed by the city's private manufacturers in Spokane in 1939.

The workforce at Galena repaired its first aircraft, a B-17 bomber named "Junior," in June of 1943, just sixteen months after the completion of the first building on the site. Work on the aircraft went on around the clock in order to return the plane to action as quickly as possible. The workers spent a thousand hours renewing the frame, replacing damaged parts and overhauling the engines.<sup>57</sup> Engine overhaul was a prime concern of the depot. Without a ready supply of working engines, the Air Corps was useless. Speed and efficiency were the goals as specialized engine overhaul maintenance began in October of 1943 when the 12 acre hangar was completed and the maintenance function moved indoors. The workers repaired 50 engines that month and tripled that output in November. The workers continued to increase their production in December by repairing 350 engines. The desired goal was over 550 engines per month by June of the next year. Had the engine overhaul shop been fully manned, its production was predicted at 1200 engines per month.<sup>58</sup> In June of 1945, three women finished the repair of the 10,000th engine. This work amounted to an estimated savings of \$87,000,000 over the cost of replacing damaged engines with new ones.<sup>59</sup> The savings for repairing the B-17s during the first four months of full operation were over \$51,000,000.<sup>60</sup> By the end of November 1944, Galena had repaired 1,250 B-17s alone. As the work continued, the savings increased as more aircraft were repaired and replacement costs went up.

55 Spokane Daily Chronicle, March 31, 1942, p. 3, col. 3.

56 Spokesman Review, March 27, 1942, p. 1, col. 5.

57 Spokesman Review, June 9, 1943, p. 1, col. 4.



## LIFE AT THE DEPOT

One of the many thousand civilian employees working at the depot was C.E. "Bud" Stratford. Mr. Stratford left Bozeman, Montana, on Dec 8, 1941 for Seattle, where he hoped he would find work as a painter. "Bud" was hired by the Boeing Company the next day. However, a series of fateful events would eventually lead him to Spokane, where he has remained for over 40 years. As it turns out "Bud" needed a birth certificate to continue his work at Boeing and therefore had to go to Ogden, Utah, to get the proper paper work from his mother who had moved there from Montana. While in Ogden, people talked him into applying for work at the Ogden Air Depot. He eventually applied for work as an "Aircraft Paint and Dope Mechanic," and was hired on the spot and put right to work. He was made assistant foreman and put in charge of the swing shift. He loved his job so much that soon he forgot about Boeing and Seattle, but soon he was to encounter "Spokane" for the personnel that needed training for the Spokane Air Depot were assigned to his shift, and soon the swing shift was known as the "Spokane Shift."

Mr. Stratford was very impressed with the caliber of the "Spokane Shift" personnel and had gotten to know the Spokane Superintendent, Fred Burke, who later asked him to go back to Spokane with him once the group's training was completed. Bud's wife was not overly excited about Ogden and when he asked her about the move, she quickly agreed to head toward Spokane. Bud then put in for a transfer and waited for the answer. The answer came soon. He came in for work a few days after and was summoned to the commander's office where he was met with a "grin" and orders to Spokane - report in 36 hours. He went home, packed a couple of bags, and he and his family were off to Spokane, the Air Corps taking care of moving the family's other belongings. He reported for work and was assigned to a building at 3rd Avenued and Stevens to begin work. (This building was an ex-new car dealership then, and became a new car dealership after the war - now Fred and Frank's Ford Center.) There were many familiar faces there -- his Ogden trainees.

Bud was later sent to Felts Field to set up a shop similar to the Paint and Dope Section in Ogden. There was a B-25 "Mitchell" Bomber waiting for them to begin work on once they were set up. The crew discovered that Jimmie Doolittle had used Felts Field as a practice site for his Tokyo raid and this one aircraft was left behind. They also were on some P-38s headed for the Pacific Theater. He and his section were also hosts to Bob Hope and his touring USO Show when they performed at Gonzaga's stadium. Soon they began to work on B-17's to make technical order changes and modifications before the planes were sent to the field. Also, one of Bud's crew chiefs, Herb Schedin became known all over the Air Corps for being able to free hand paint emblems, names, etc, on the nose of the aircraft. Most notable of the aircraft was one B-17 privately purchased and given to the Air Corps. The Spokane "Athletic Round Table" wanted their emblem painted on the nose with the names "Esmerelda" and "Athletic Round Table, Spokane, Washington." When club president, Joe Albi was told by Bud that this could be done by Herb and his crew, he was extremely pleased.

Finally, Bud was moved to "Galena" where his crew began working on more B-17's at the permanent facility that would eventually become Spokane Air Base. They worked on the famous "Memphis Belle" and restored it to its original condition before its European missions, including replacing a section of wing that had had a 20mm shell go through it during a mission.

While at Galena, Mr. Stratford had some very interesting encounters associated with duties in aircraft Paint and Dope Mechanics. The chief test pilot at the base, Capt G. A. Heckert had insisted that all foremen make at least two flights a week in aircraft they were putting out of the depot. Bud and Capt Heckert got to be good friends and so Mr. Stratford accompanied the officer on several dozen flights during his stay at the depot. One particularly notable flight was in a B-25 that had come in from Great Falls, Montana. When they were testing the aircraft, soon after it arrived from Montana, the right landing gear refused to come down. All their hydraulic fluid leaked out and they were stuck with two gear down and one up, circling the base. A C-43 took up a 5-gallon can of fluid and passed it to the B-25 using a rope through the navigator's bubble. The first air refueling operation over Fairchild was thus conducted, but to no avail as the fluid also leaked out through the wheel well. Eventually they made an emergency landing with two gears down and one up and no one was injured.

Additionally, on one flight to Boeing Field in Seattle for parts with Captain Heckert, Bud was very concerned as it looked to him as if they were about to land in a residential area. He was about to protest to the Captain when, suddenly, they were on the ground. Boeing Field had been camouflaged to look like the rest of the city from the air. Another time, Bud and his crew welcomed an aircraft crew to the depot after a "perfect" belly landing and then noticed the logo on the nose of the airplane -- Athletic Round Table.

One of the last operations Bud was involved in was the B-24 salvage operation, in 1945. Many new B-24s were being sent to Spokane for storage. They originally were scheduled to have a protective coating sprayed on them but this proved impossible. Finally orders came for them to begin a salvage operation. This consisted of removing the engines and secret equipment, and then cutting them into sections with a blow torch and sending the pieces to salvage. Nearly one thousand new B-24s were thus "salvaged."<sup>61</sup>

(Continued from page 16.)

58 Spokane Daily Chronicle, January 4, 1944, p.1, Col 6

59 Spokesman Review, June 3, 1945, p.3, Col 2

60 Spokane Daily Chronicle, January 4, 1944, p.1, Col 6

61 Memoirs of C.E. "Bud" Stratford, as told to Capt William W. Semmler, USAFR, 1984.

The scope of operations at the Spokane Army Air Depot was indeed impressive. In addition to aircraft and engine maintenance, there was the supply function. Eight large warehouses were used to store supply items which were packaged and shipped all over the world. Nearly 15,000 tons of supplies and aircraft parts were processed through the depot each month. In less than two years, a total of 150,000 tons of material were shipped from Galena, with nearly 20 percent going overseas.<sup>62</sup> The Service Area Command employed a peak of 10,000 civilian workers at the depot during the summer of 1943. Women composed 25 percent of that work force and they shared equally in all types of work, from welding and sheet metal work to making wooden boxes for shipping supplies.<sup>63</sup> The depot reached its prime production level in the fall of 1943 when aircraft were repaired in as little as three days and the engine overhaul shop established a record for the number of engines overhauled in a minimum period of time.<sup>64</sup>

#### DECLINE OF THE DEPOT

The autumn of 1943 saw the beginning of the gradual reduction in personnel at the depot. The Air Service Command, formerly the Service Area Command, declared a two week halt in hiring at the end of the summer, and in an attempt to further the production of the depot, the command realigned personnel to perform jobs for which they were best suited. The desired goal of this action was to get two men to accomplish the work of three and three the work of five. No large scale layoffs resulted immediately, but the workforce never again reached the peak of the summer of 1943.<sup>65</sup>

Discharge of personnel increased throughout the year so that by the first of the new year employment had dropped to 7536.<sup>66</sup> The efficiency procedures implemented the year before enabled the depot to maintain its high production throughout 1944. There was a slight increase in employment during the summer of 1945 when the depot converted to the repair of B-29 bombers.<sup>67</sup> This increase was rather short-lived, however. The end of the war also brought an end to the need for large scale aircraft repair. In August of 1945, the maintenance employment level was reduced by 75 percent. One month later an additional 1,100 maintenance personnel were discarded. This left the maintenance force with a total of 774 personnel.<sup>68</sup> Maintenance was not the only area to undergo force reductions. The supply function was decreased by 50 percent in February of 1946 and sustained additional reductions at the beginning of the summer.<sup>69</sup> These large reductions in personnel created an unemployment problem for the city. However, the problem was temporary because the government helped to relocate a large number of the workers to other defense installations throughout the Northwest while the majority of the distaff workers simply returned to their former roles as homemakers.

62 Spokane Daily Chronicle, August 23, 1945, p. 3, col. 4.

63 Spokesman Review, June 17, 1943, p. 1, col. 5.

64 Spokesman Review, June 3, 1945, p. 3, col. 2.

65 Spokesman Review, August 26, 1943, p. 1, col. 3.

66 Spokane Daily Chronicle, January 4, 1944, p. 1, col. 5.

67 Ibid., July 10, 1945, p. 1, col. 4.

68 Ibid., September 14, 1945, pl 1, col. 3.

69 Spokane Daily Chronicle, February 10, 1946, p. 3, col. 4.

The city was more concerned with the closure of the entire installation. The reductions alerted the chamber of commerce to the possibility that the depot was marked for deactivation. This development would not be looked upon favorably by the city which feared not only the impact of mass unemployment but also the gradual withdrawal of the military presence in Spokane. James Ford called Senator Warren Magnuson in Washington, D. C. in October of 1945 to discover the Army's plans for the depot. Magnuson informed him that operations were being curtailed at the depot but the maintenance function would continue, perhaps in conjunction with Geiger Field.<sup>70</sup> Despite this assurance, the personnel reductions continued throughout the next year. Even the military establishment at the depot was sustaining losses as 110 military officer authorizations were eliminated in November of 1946.<sup>71</sup> These continuing drops in the workforce did little to assuage the fears of the city.

Any fears that may have been calmed by the reports from Washington were soon aroused again in early 1947 when the government ordered the civilian work force at the depot to be reduced by 1000 personnel. There were 2523 civilians employed at the depot and this reduction would equal a 38 percent layoff.<sup>72</sup> Once again the chamber went into action by asking Magnuson to investigate. He learned that the reduction was a budgetary necessity and that it did not mean the closure of the depot. He indicated that the Army Air Corps intended to keep the depot as active as funds would allow.<sup>73</sup> The chamber also made contact with Washington Senator Henry Cain. He supported Magnuson's information but indicated that the future of the depot was limited.<sup>74</sup> His predictions were correct. By the end of March 1947, the Spokane headquarters of the Air Material Command, formerly the Air Service Command, was deactivated and the Spokane Air Depot came to an end.<sup>75</sup> The city was not happy with the decision and argued against it through its legislators. The civic leaders argued that the splendid war record for production and efficiency which the depot had earned qualified it for consideration as a permanent part of the Air Corps supply system.<sup>76</sup> The Air Corps had reorganized its supply apparatus and held that the dwindling funds appropriated for supply operations did not warrant the continuance of activity at the depot.<sup>77</sup> The city would have to accept the fact that the supply function of the depot would no longer be a part of the operations at the field. It could find solace in the knowledge that the installation itself was not being closed.

70 "Spokane Affairs", October 22, 1945, p. 2. col. 2.

71 Spokane Daily Chronicle, November 9, 1946, p. 1, col. 5.

72 James Ford to Warren Magnuson, March 14, 1957, Chamber of Commerce

Files

73 General Spaatz to Warren Magnuson, March 11, 1947, Chamber of Commerce

Files

74 Memo of telephone conversation between James Ford and Senator Cain, March 4, 1947, Chamber of Commerce Files

75 Spokane Daily Chronicle, March 29, 1947, p. 1, col. 3; Colonel Shower, Commander, Spokane Army Air Field, to James Ford, October 31, 1947, Chamber of Commerce Files

76 James Ford to Senator Cain, March 7, 1947, Chamber of Commerce Files

77 General Spaatz to Senator Magnuson, March 11, 1947, Chamber of Commerce Files

## CHAPTER V

## A WING IS BORN

As the Second World War accelerated in Europe, the need for combat ready units also increased. Although ground forces were considered the mainstay of the military force, the increasing importance of strategic bombing was gaining widespread attention not only from ground commanders but from the War Department as well. As part of the step up in Army Air Force (AAF) units, the 92d Bombardment Group was constituted on 28 January 1942 and activated on 1 March of that same year. Upon its "birth," the 92d was assigned to Barksdale Field, Louisiana, under the authority of the Third Air Force, and consisted of the 325th, 326th, 327th and 407th Bombardment Squadrons.

The outfit, still a "paper unit," was transferred to MacDill Field, Florida, on the 16th of March 1942, where it came to life by acquiring personnel from the 29th and 97th Bombardment Groups. On the 19th of May, the unit changed stations again; this time to Brandenton Field, Florida. There, for a period of one month, the unit continued its training in the "latest thing in aerial warfare," the B-17 Flying Fortress. The unit was then ready to take the first step towards its destiny and World War Two.

It was during the brief stay at Sarasota that both Group and Squadron insignias were adopted. Group Commander Colonel James S. Sutton and Major William M. Reid, the Group's Air Executive Officer, became acquainted "through a mutual regard for fishing" with Mr. V. T. Hamlin, the cartoonist-originator of the nationally famous syndicated comic strip, "Alley Oop". The two officers prevailed upon Mr. Hamlin to design the insignias, one of which has remained to this day as the emblem of the 325th Bombardment Squadron. Hamlin also designed the original Group shield, a prehistoric pterodactyl banking over the words, "Higher, Stronger, Faster." That emblem was superseded in 1957 by the current design.

On 20 June 1942, the 92d flew to Westover Field, Massachusetts for a brief period of ten days. From there the crews flew to Dow Field, Maine, where the unit remained from June until the middle of August. During that time, the 92d continued its intensive training, including experimental work in endurance flying, load distribution and other factors essential to flying over the Atlantic Ocean.



## CHAPTER VI

## THE TRANSITION

The years immediately following World War II brought many changes to the Spokane Air Depot. Perhaps the most frequent change was of the name of the installation. Before the war ended, the legal name of the depot was changed to "Spokane Air Depot". The word "Army" occurred in October of 1944.<sup>78</sup> When the depot itself was inactivated in 1947, the title of the airfield "Spokane Army Air Field," replaced the depot nomenclature.<sup>79</sup> It was not uncommon to see the "Army" omitted from this title by the press, but it was not official. Only a year later, the name was changed again. The new title became "Spokane Air Force Base."<sup>80</sup> This name was used to identify the installation and others like it as being part of the newly created military branch, the U. S. Air Force. For a very short period of time the base was known semi-officially as Bong Air Force Base. The Air Force was implementing a new policy of designating the postal addresses of its installations in honor of fallen military aviators. Ira Bong was a famous World War II aviator who was killed while flight testing an aircraft.<sup>81</sup>

There were also many organizational changes at the installation in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Concurrent with the deactivation of the supply depot, the government announced that two bombardment groups would be assigned to the airfield. The groups, the 92d and the 98th, recently back from Europe, brought with them 30 B-29 bomber aircraft and 3000 men to fly and maintain them. When both groups were located at the base in November of 1947 it became the largest B-29 organization in the Strategic Air Command.<sup>82</sup>

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78 General Order #86, September 4, 1944, Hq Army Air Corps, Corps of Engineers, Real Estate, Forrestal Building, Washington, D. C.

79 General Order #12, January 13, 1948, Hq Air Force, Army Corps of Engineers, Real Estate, Forrestal Building, Washington, D. C.

80 Ibid.

81 Historical files of the 92d Bombardment Group (H), 92d Bomb Wing, History Office, Fairchild Air Force Base, Spokane, Washington.

82 Spokesman Review, November 4, 1947, p. 1, col. 5.

## CHAPTER VII

## THE WING DURING THE WAR YEARS

In late June 1942, as the war was raging in both Europe and the Pacific, the ground echelon of the 92d began its move to England. By mid-August the air echelon began its deployment to England by flying the North Atlantic route from Bangor, Maine to Newfoundland to Prestwick, Scotland. The 92d Bombardment Group was the first heavy bomber unit to fly this route and the completion of the flight without the loss of a single aircraft not only brought forth a letter of commendation from General "Hap" Arnold, but also helped convince the War Department to accept the route for military use.

During the fall of 1942, the 92d flew its first combat mission over occupied Europe. Its baptism by fire came when the group attacked the Avions Potez Aircraft Factory at Meaulte, France, a plant being used as a repair depot by the Luftwaffe. In January 1943, the group moved to Alconbury Field, England, and was removed from combat status. However, it was hoped that the unit would soon be returned to combat. That dream came true when, during mid-May 1943, the 92d returned to combat status. The first mission flown was an attack of the shipyards at Keil, Germany. In rapid succession there followed the famous raids on Heligoand and the submarine pens at Lorient and St Nazire, France. Shipyards, sub pens, and airfields were the 92d's primary concern in the spring of 1943. During that summer, the unit turned its attention towards the enemy's gigantic industrial might, striking such targets as the synthetic rubber plant at Hults, aircraft factories at Nantes and other strategic targets. On one of the raids over Hanover, Germany, Second Lieutenant John C. Organ earned the unit's first Congressional Medal of Honor.

As one of the steps toward gaining air supremacy over "Fortress Europe", the 92d turned its squadrons loose on the Luftwaffe airfields in France and Holland. The group also pressed its case against German industry with such notable raids as the one on the Bochum steel works and probably the most famous raids of the entire war, the attack on the ball bearing factories at Schweinfurt.

Throughout the remainder of 1943, strikes directed against airfields and port installations in Western Europe were interspersed with attacks upon targets at such distant and widely scattered places as Gdynia, Poland; Schweinfurt, Germany; and Knaben, Norway. Harbors and U-boat plants in Germany and robot or "buzz bomb" bomb site in the Pad de Calais area had been added to the group's list of objectives.



On 27 September 1944 the 92d completed its 200th mission, an attack upon the marshaling yards at Cologne. In its two years of duty in the European Theater, the group had acquired a great deal of combat experience and was then rated as the oldest of the heavy bomber groups in England. In addition to its activities in connection with strategic bombing, the 92d engaged in a number of special operations. In July of the same year, at the time of the St. Lo offensive, the group gave support to ground forces by acting as "flying artillery" for the troops of the U.S. First Army. On the 17 September 1944, aircraft of the unit bombed gun emplacements and bridges in support of airborne operations in the Netherlands. During December 1944--January 1945, the group took part in the air phase of one of the most decisive battles during the entire war: the Battle of the Bulge, and in February 1945 contributed to the coordinated air offensive against German lines of communications.

On 7 April 1945, the 92d completed its 300th mission by attacking the Nazi airfields at Wesendorf. A week later it was used directly against the enemy ground forces in the Royan area near Bordeaux, where a pocket of German resistance still existed. With the bombing of the Skoda Armament plant at Pilsen, Czechoslovakia, on 25 April 1945, the 92d concluded its combat operations in WWII. During its months of service overseas, the group, a veteran organization with its share of famous names and awards, had flown a total of 310 combat missions.

The 92d was inactivated on 28 February 1946 at Istres, France, where it remained inactive until 4 August 1946 when it was activated as the 92d Bombardment Group (Very Heavy), at Fort Worth Army Field, Texas, and received the B-29 Super-fortress.

## CHAPTER VIII

## THE 92d GETS A HOME

After only a brief stay at Fort Worth Army Air Field, the group was moved to Smoky Hill Air Field, Kansas, during October 1946, where it remained until June 1947. During that same month, the group was again moved to what would more or less become its permanent home, Spokane Air Force Base. On 15 July 1947, under the command of Colonel Albert J. Shower, the 92d completed its move. Almost three years to the day after the 92d arrived at Spokane AFB, the group was ordered to move to the Far East Theater under the command of Colonel Claude E. Putnam. Elements of the 92d began leaving the base on 4 July 1950 for Yokota AB, Japan, from which the attacks against Communist forces in North Korea were launched. Just eight days after the group was first alerted, it dropped its first bombs over North Korea.

While with the Far East Air Forces (FEAF), the group was part of Major General Emmett O'Donnell's FEAF Bomber Command and participated in the strategic bombing of key industrial targets in Korea. Those targets were soon knocked out and tactical operations begun. They included cutting off vital North Korean supply lines and bombing of supplies and troop areas in support of United Nations (UN) ground forces. While in the Far East Theater, the group flew 836 sorties and dropped some 33,000 bombs totaling 7,500 tons.

Early in October 1950, the 92d was released by General Douglas MacArthur and returned to the U.S. Shortly after its return, the outfit was redesignated as a Heavy Bombardment Wing at Spokane AFB.

"FAIRCHILD" AIR FORCE BASE

As the second half of the twentieth century began, the city of Spokane was experiencing a high level of military involvement. Spokane Air Force Base was having its name changed again as its mission was experiencing expansion. In 1949, the Air Force announced a policy of renaming its installations, instead of their postal units, in honor of fallen military aviators. Each community was invited to make suggestions for naming the base near them. The prospective name had to be that of an aviator who had given his life in air service to his country and was preferably from the region where the installation was located. Spokane offered several names to be considered, although the chamber of commerce felt that the name changing had gone far enough. Perhaps the organization did not like the idea of removing the name of Spokane from the public or military attention.

Men like John E. Gay and Charles F. Gumm, who sacrificed their lives by guiding their wounded aircraft away from populated areas before they crashed, were suggested. There was a Clarence Howard who drowned in Germany in 1944 and a Bud Jennison who was killed in the South Pacific. These names were suggested to the Air Force along with the name of Muir S. Fairchild. He had just recently died while serving in the Pentagon. He possessed a fine military record that included being commandant of the Air University and Vice Chief of Staff for the Air Force.<sup>83</sup>

The name of General Fairchild was selected by the Air Force in September 1950 and the installation received its current name. The Air Force conducted a special dedication ceremony at the base in July 1951. The general's widow and children were in attendance, as well as the Commander in Chief of the Strategic Air Command, General Curtis E. Lemay. As part of the celebration, which included a formal military parade and an unveiling of the general's portrait, there was a flyover of various aircraft. One aircraft was the new B-36 which was being assigned to the base. On that summer day the base entered the jet age with a new airplane and a new name.<sup>84</sup>

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83 Spokane Daily Chronicle, June 3, 1949, p. 3, col. 5.

84 Spokane Bomber Views, newspaper of Fairchild AFB, July 20, 1951, p. 1, col 5.

## THE 1950's

On the 29th of July 1951, the 92d received its first B-36 bomber called the "Peacemaker."

During the middle of 1953, the Wing participated in Operation Big Stick, which was among the first of a series of tests designed to measure the capabilities of the B-36 in a long distance flight. The exercise was the first time a B-36 had made a non-stop flight from the U. S. to the Far East and return. On 15 May 1955, the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award was officially presented to the Wing.

On 17 October 1954, the Wing deployed to Anderson AFB, Guam for a 90 day temporary duty (TDY) assignment until 13 January 1955 when the first increment of B-36 aircraft returned to Fairchild AFB (named after General Muir S. Fairchild, Vice Chief of Staff for Air, on 24 November 1950). Again, beginning on 13 April 1956, the Wing flew to Anderson AFB on Operation Crosswind for a second 90 day TDY mission, returning on 11 July 1956. On 4 September 1956, the Wing separated from the 57th Air Division and the 92d Air Base Group was formed to carry out the housekeeping functions at Fairchild.

The first of October 1956 signalled the entrance of the Wing into the official conversion period (1 October 1956 - 15 October 1957) during which the B-36 aircraft was retired and the base became geared for the new B-52 "Stratofortress". Although the B-36 never dropped a bomb in anger, it more than served SAC as a primary weapon system for approximately half a decade. With Colonel C. A. Neeley, Wing Commander at the controls, the first B-52 arrived at Fairchild on 26 March 1957 and Operation Big Switch, the changeover to the jet bomber was well under way. During the late spring and summer of 1957, delivery of B-52Ds continued until the full complement of bomber aircraft had been received on 22 September.

The strike capabilities of the Wing were greatly expanded in July 1957 with the activation of the 92d Air Refueling Squadron (92AREFS), previously stationed at Bergstrom AFB, Texas, where the crews flew converted B-29 bombers redesignated KB-29s. On 21 February 1958, the 92AREFS received its first KC-135 all-jet tanker, a process that continued until 11 September when the conversion was completed. The crews of the 92d didn't waste any time proving their superior capabilities. Six days after the squadron became operational, a 92AREFS crew shattered two world records by flying at a speed of 587.13 miles per hour while carrying a load of 22,046 pounds of fuel. Before the year had ended, the crews of the 92AREFS had established seven world speed records. The previous record had been set by the Soviet Union.

## CHAPTER IX

## THE AEROSPACE AGE

During April 1959, construction began on Atlas Intercontinental Ballistic Missile(ICBM) launch complexes encircling Fairchild. On 1 April 1960, the 567th Strategic Missile Squadron (567SMS) was activated and assigned to the Wing, and made history as the first Air Force unit to include both manned aircraft and ICBMs under the same unit. In March 1962, the Wing was redesignated the 92d Aerospace Wing to emphasize the growing role the Wing had to play during the aerospace age.

In June 1960, several units were realigned. The Wing's 327th Bombardment Squadron was assigned to the 4170th Strategic Wing at Larson AFB, Washington. Also in June, the 92d Bombardment Wing was awarded the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, first Oak Leaf Cluster, by the Secretary of the Air Force Dudley C. Shart on 17 June 1960. On the first of March 1961, the Wing lost its 326th Bomb Squadron. The unit was transferred to the 4141st Strategic Wing at Glasgow AFB, Montana, leaving the Wing responsible for only one bomb squadron, the 325th (the 407th being inactivated on 26 February 1946).

By the end of September 1961, all nine of the Atlas ICBM complexes around Fairchild were completed and the Wing's 567SMS assumed full control of the complexes as SAC declared the missile sites at Fairchild operational. The 567SMS was one of the primary tactical units of the Wing until the spring of 1965 when its Atlas missiles were retired. During the short span of active duty, the 567th earned almost every major award which could be given to a strategic missile squadron.

Another addition to the Wing's arsenal occurred in 1961 when AGM 28B "Hound Dog" missiles were delivered. The first Hound Dog arrived aboard a C-133 on 2 November. Launched from beneath the wings of the B-52, the Hound Dog was designed to extend the punch of the bomber by knocking out enemy defenses and secondary targets.

Early in April 1966, the first elements of the 43d Air Refueling Squadron (43AREFS) also equipped with the KC-135 all jet tanker, were transferred to Fairchild from Larson AFB, Washington. Larson, located near Moses Lake, Washington, was eventually closed and Fairchild became the 43d's third home.

## CHAPTER X

## SOUTHEAST ASIA

During 1968, the year termed by many as the height of the Vietnam conflict, the 92nd Strategic Wing had been involved in Southeast Asia for exactly four years. The Wing began its support on 25 September 1964 when as a result of the Tonkin Gulf episode, it deployed a KC-135 Stratotanker to the Philippines. The tanker, along with others, refueled fighters involved in air operations over Southeast Asia. The Wing's tanker returned at the end of October and another KC-135 from Fairchild replaced it in November.

As military operations in Vietnam escalated in 1965, the demand for air refueling increased. In March 1965, an operation for the air refueling of tactical forces, nicknamed Young Tiger, was established. The 92SAW was tasked from 1965 through 1968 to supply tankers and crews for the operation. From March 1965 to March 1968, 47 crews and 25 KC-135s from the Wing flew air refueling missions for fighters in Southeast Asia. The Wing's participation was somewhat sporadic most of 1965, but it was greatly increased in the spring of 1966. From April through June, the 92d provided seven tanker crews who flew 526 air refueling missions. From then on, the 92SAW had an average of four tankers and crews deployed to Southeast Asia for fighter air refueling operations.

While in Southeast Asia, tanker crews provided numerous "saves," where an unscheduled refueling meant the difference between going down and returning home. Wing tankers were credited with approximately 30 of those "saves" during the four years in Southeast Asia.

Wing bombers also made their debut in Southeast Asia. They flew for Operation Arc Light, the nickname for bombing missions in Vietnam. Tankers were also a part of Arc Light, by refueling B-52s to and from selected targets. The Wing first became involved in Arc Light activities in November 1965 when it supplied two tankers and crews for a brief time. In October 1966, the 92SAW stepped up its support. Two B-52 bombers, three KC-135s and a small augmentation team from the Wing deployed for 45 days to Anderson AFB, Guam. From then until March 1968, approximately 11 B-52s, 17 bomber crews, 11 KC-135s and 12 tanker crews deployed to Anderson for 60 day intervals.

On 1 April 1968, a major part of the 92SAW deployed for six months to Southeast Asia for Operation Arc Light. The Wing sent it's 325BMS, one of its tanker squadrons, and more than 1,000 support personnel to the forward area. The Wing's two tanker squadrons split the duties for the operation. The 43AREFS deployed first, and the 92d replaced it at the end of June. The 92SAW encountered no problems in assuming its war duties in Southeast Asia.



The primary mission of the Wing as a major cadre unit under, the 3rd Air Division was to conduct aerial bombing against Viet Cong strongholds in Vietnam. Bombing crews had a difficult task, however, for the first time since the early days of WWII, strategic bombing crews were called upon to render close support to ground forces. Within the six month tour, B-52 crews flew nearly 2050 sorties over enemy territory, logging 14,000 flying hours and dropping approximately 50,000 tons of bombs. Crews from the 92SAW flew missions over such targets in support of military operations in Khe Sanh, Vinh Binh Province, and the A Shau Valley. By 23 September, most of the Wing had returned to Fairchild.

During the remainder of 1968, none of the Wing's bombers supported further Arc Light activity. However, wing tanker squadrons continued to provide individual crews and aircraft in support of Young Tiger operations as well as several other activities dealing with deployment of tactical aircraft to and from Southeast Asia.

Again, during 1969, increasing enemy activity within Southeast Asia necessitated the presence of the 92SAW. As during the previous Arc Light tour, Fairchild crews participated in missions under the auspices of the 4133d Bombardment Wing (Provisional) and made significant contributions to victories of ground forces in such clashes as the battle of Ben Het in June and July. At the end of their 189 day stay, bomber crews had dropped more than 63,000 tons of bombs and had logged more than 11,700 flying hours with 1,700 sorties.

The conversion to G-Model B-52s began on 16 October 1970 with the arrival of the first B-52G. Throughout the remainder of the year, the newer aircraft kept arriving as the older "Ds" were turned over to other units still using the aircraft. Conversion was officially completed New Year's Day 1971 with the assumption of the B-52 alert commitment using an all G-model force.

A major communist offensive rivaling that of the Tet Offensive in 1972 again sent bomber crews to Anderson AFB, beginning in late May 1972 as part of the Arc Light bombing surge nicknamed "Bullet Shot." Meanwhile, on 1 July 1972, the 92SAW was redesignated the 92d Bombardment Wing (Heavy). On 21 December 1972, the 92d suffered it's first and only loss of a B-52 in combat when during a nighttime raid on Hanoi, a Fairchild crew was lost over North Vietnam when their aircraft was struck by enemy fire. The plane exploded and eyewitnesses in the following aircraft saw no parachutes. Shortly after the initial report, the names of Lt Col James Y. Nagahiro and Capt Lynn R. Beens turned up on North Vietnam's prisoner of war lists. After several weeks of captivity, the prisoners of war were released, with the others listed as either killed or missing in action. The rest of the deployed forces stayed on to fly further Arc Light missions into Cambodia, until recalled during the fall of 1973.

## CHAPTER XI

## A TIME OF PEACE, A TIME OF CHANGE

From 1974 to present, Fairchild AFB and the 92nd Bomb Wing have been involved in many changes in base facilities and missions, as well as several peace time tests and special operations.

In late 1974 the Air Force announced plans to convert the 141st Fighter Interceptor Group of the Washington Air National Guard at Geiger Field, to the 141st Air Refueling Wing and be located at Fairchild. The unit was to eventually have 10 KC-135 tankers assigned. Work began to study facility needs and by 1976 eight tankers had been transferred from the active duty units to the new 141st Air Refueling Wing and most of the operations moved to Fairchild. Also in 1976, the 92d Bomb Wing was named to be the advisory unit for the new wing.

During this time of change the 92d Bomb Wing always maintained its readiness stance. That capability was put to the test in August 1976 when the United States military went into an increased readiness posture due to an incident in the Demilitarized Zone separating North and South Korea. As a result of the confrontation, two United States Army officers were killed, and the United States Military was put on "alert" in case hostilities broke out. As a precautionary measure, the Air Force deployed several F-4 and F-111 aircraft to Korea from Kadena AB, Okinawa and from Mountain Home AFB, Idaho, respectively. The deployment was a success due to the refueling involvement of KC-135s and aircrews belonging to the 92BMW.

In 1978, in the face of budget restrictions, increased fuel prices, and resultant reduced flying hours, the Air Force directed Strategic Air command to conduct an augmentation flying training program for B-52 and KC-135 copilots. Through this program, called Accelerated Copilot Enrichment (ACE), SAC and 92d BMW copilots regained the valuable and necessary flying experience lost when USAF reduced flying hours. The Air Force saved money (ACE used economical T-37 and T-38 jet trainers instead of more costly B-52s and KC-135s) and the copilots gained experience as aircraft commanders. Fairchild became one of two bases to be the first to implement ACE. In the middle of 1978, Fairchild copilots began participation in ACE and the summer of 1978 saw little rest for the aircraft or personnel involved as the program got into full swing.

Also, in 1978, tankers assigned to the 92d BMW became the first SAC unit to refuel Navy A-6s. Up until this time only A-6s had refueled other A-6s, thus the 92d BMW became a leader in another area of operation and was instrumental in transitioning SAC to newer and innovative operations.

On 18 May 1980, the Wing was faced with another serious challenge. On a sultry Sunday afternoon, Mount Saint Helens, a dormant volcano in Southwestern Washington, erupted, spewing volcanic ash thousands of feet into the atmosphere. Within a matter of a few hours, the ash had advanced on Fairchild, then celebrating its open house. Security Police assigned to the base were required to evacuate some 75,000 personnel from the flightline area, and operations personnel were forced to evacuate several visiting aircraft before the advancing ash. The last of the visiting personnel departed the base, and most of the aircraft airborne, the ash began to engulf the Pacific Northwest. For a week, ash slowly drifted over the state of Washington. After the holocaust, Fairchild had received an official measurement of two inches of ash; however, the angry mountain wasn't finished with the Wing. Again, on 22 and 23 May, the mountain blew. Another major eruption sent more of the abrasive ash into the air, but this time the 92nd was prepared. Upon notification of the eruption, the Wing immediately dispatched its aircraft to Northern California SAC bases until the danger passed. Fortunately, the winds changed and the ash blew in a more southerly route into Oregon and the aircraft returned shortly thereafter.

In October 1981, a survey team from Air Force Aeronautical Systems Division conducted an Air Launched Cruise Missile (ALCM) site survey at Fairchild. In 1982, the wing received notification that the 92d would be one of the first bomb wings to receive the Offensive Avionics System/Air Launched Cruise Missile (OAS/ALCM). Work began in January 1983 to prepare Fairchild for its new weapon system.

In 1983, the 92d BMW again became the forerunner as the first Strategic Air Command Base to deploy its assigned aircraft, while the runway received a badly needed facelift. Since 1942, when the Spokane Army Depot was constructed, the runway had not received major repair. To permit this vital facelift operation, the 92d deployed its aircraft and personnel to Grant County Airport, Washington (formally, Larsen Air Force Base) and Grand Forks Air Force Base, North Dakota. Although the operation, nicknamed "Busy Moses," began on 7 May and was completed on 8 August 1983, planning started about a year before the move. Prior to the move, Colonel John Allen, Wing Commander, established a Runway Closure Office with two Lieutenant Colonels assigned full time. Colonel Terry Jones represented Operations and acted as the overall coordinator for the project. Colonel Donald Shelhammer acted as the maintenance representative. Captain Mary May joined the Runway Closure Office later and worked with the Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) and support areas.

The Grant County Airport was selected as the deployment site because of the close proximity to Fairchild, the 13,000 plus foot runway, and the ideal flying conditions. Personnel, supplies, and equipment could be transported by road in a little less than 2 hours. Parts could be recycled through the shops at Fairchild and aircrews could be bussed to the aircraft.

The 92d Bombardment Wing's operation activities left Fairchild as Busy Moses commenced. The first convoy loads of equipment and support personnel headed for Moses Lake on 2 May. Once an adequate number of maintenance and security personnel were on hand, and living arrangements were made for them, the Wing started the large job of deploying its aircraft to Moses Lake, Washington and Grand Forks AFB, North Dakota. The first of the Wing's aircraft flew out of Fairchild AFB on 16 May. Over the next couple of weeks, aircraft activity at Fairchild lessened as the Wing's B-52 alert force aircraft and crew were ferried to Grand Forks AFB, North Dakota; the KC-135 tanker alert force and the remaining bombers and tankers flew to Moses Lake.

A convoy of over twenty government vehicles made the 110-mile trip to Moses Lake on 9 May. The convoy included security vehicles, busses, trucks, and heavy maintenance equipment on flatbed trucks. Despite cold and damp weather, the convoy left Fairchild before noon. News reporter Ken Niles and a cameraman from KXLY-TV recorded the event for broadcast on the local evening news.

Due to the depleted vehicle force at Fairchild, constraints were placed on Government Vehicle (GOV) use on base. Vehicles were not available for Morale, Welfare, and Recreation activities, club use, or chapel use. To ease the travel constraints between the base and the forward operating location (FOL), 1st Lt Donald VanDine, 92 Transportation Officer, scheduled daily shuttle bus runs between the two points. The shuttle runs took pressure off the thinly stretched GOVs by transporting people, supply items, aircraft parts and paperwork from the base to the FOL.

The same system brought people home from Moses Lake. Break-downs were inevitable as the vehicles logged many extra miles on the trek from one location to another. Vehicles most susceptible to breakdowns included units like stepvans that normally traveled short distances and at low speeds. The 110 miles between the two points left its mark of wear and tear on engines and transmissions.

The annual Base Open House on 22 May marked the last day aircraft used the flightline and runway at Fairchild. After the 65,000 visitors left Fairchild, more than 50 visiting aircraft departed the base. The last of the Wing's aircraft flew out that evening in accordance with contract requirements stating "all aircraft would be gone by midnight."

After the 92d's aircraft arrived at Moses Lake, personnel got to the main job at hand - the mission. Colonel Byrd, 92 BMW Deputy Commander for Operations, stated the mission of the Wing was two-fold in nature while at Moses Lake. First, the wing requirements, and secondly, to keep its aircrew training "up to speed."

Grant County Housing Authority provided quarters in the old Larsen AFB "Wherry" housing units. Although the houses had been freshly painted inside, the exteriors were in bad shape and lawns did not exist. Base Civil Engineers supplied water hoses and sprinklers, so in most cases the lawns looked better than when Fairchild's personnel arrived. The furniture supplied in the houses included GI-style bunk beds and ranch oak dressers. The Wing had two-, three-, and four-bedroom houses with two people per room. The 92d rented stoves and refrigerators from the Housing Authority. Although the refrigerators proved necessary, in most cases the stoves were not used.

Maintenance and security personnel made up the majority of people at Moses Lake, with 400 and 115 respectively. Maintenance deployed on a two-week schedule; security and communications personnel stayed at Grant County Airport for the duration of the deployment. Most support functions usually had a one-week schedule. Either the Wing Commander or Vice Wing Commander stayed at Moses Lake for the entire period. The Deputy Commander for Maintenance (DCM), Deputy Commander for Operations (DCO) or their assistants were also present. The Base Commander's function was filled either by the Deputy Commander for Resource Management (DCR), Assistant DCR, Base Commander or his deputy. Operations had a Squadron Commander for Operations officer from the 325th BMS, 92d ARS, or 43d ARS on hand at the airport whenever flying was conducted. The 92d Safety Office also provided a representative during flying operations.

Maintenance's capability to turn aircraft and Operation's ability to supply aircrews dictated the flying schedule. The 92d originally scheduled 12 B-52s per week and later increased sortie production by flying "hot seat swaps" from the Spokane International Airport.

Colonel Biancur, 92 BMW Vice Commander, stated, "...the 92 BMW by far exceeded the expectation of the entire deployment. We flew more, fixed more, and kept high morale for the entire period and did it safely. The spirit of cooperation among the citizens of Moses Lake and the 92 BMW was kept at a high degree. The civilian community went out of their way to make us feel welcome and at home. They were extremely complimentary of our people on their behavior and professionalism. It was a good summer camp."

The acquisition of the Air Launched Cruise Missile (ALCM) to the Air Force weapon inventory became a reality in the fall of 1983 as Fairchild received its first shipment. The ALCM gave the Air Force the advantage of better survivability for the B-52s, since the aircraft did not have to penetrate enemy territory in order to strike targets. The ALCM could be launched from as far as 1500 miles from the target, could fly at undetectable altitudes, follow the terrain and be able to strike its target. In addition to the ALCM, the first Fairchild modified B-52G arrived on 9 September 1983, piloted by Colonel John R. Allen, Jr., Wing Commander. The modification platform was the offensive avionics system (OAS), which was a computerized electronic navigational guidance system. The OAS was designed to enhance and meet the needs for an improved B-52G/H weapon delivery system.

As the modified aircraft continued to arrive, aircrews began an intensive training program to familiarize themselves with the particulars of the OAS. Aircrew schedules were tasked to ensure aircrews remained proficient in flying activities. Maintenance personnel were equally busy. With the recently completed Integrated Maintenance Facility, munitions maintenance personnel were kept busy as the flow of ALCMs continued to arrive. Maintenance personnel were also receiving and inspecting the newly modified OAS-B-52s as they were returning from the depots.

The spring of 1984 brought with it numerous inspections and evaluations by higher headquarter agencies. The Headquarters SAC Civil Engineering and Services Management Assistance Team (CESMET) arrived to review the management practices of the civil engineering and services squadrons. Following their visit, the Headquarter SAC Inspector General arrived for a ten day inspection. The inspection encompassed the Wing



operational readiness, management effectiveness, disaster preparedness response and capability, and nuclear surety activities. The Wing received a Satisfactory rating and there were 76 individuals recognized by the Inspector General as professional performers. The list of professional performers represented the largest number of recipients, of any Fairchild inspection, by the Inspector General.

On 29 August 1984, the reigns of the 92d Bombardment Wing were relinquished, by Colonel John R. Allen, Jr., to Colonel James W. Meier. Colonel Allen was reassigned as the Senior Military Advisor to the Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency in Washington D. C.. Lieutenant General James E. Light, Jr., Commander, Fifteenth Air Force, March Air Force Base, California, presided over the ceremony.

December 1984 saw the first test of the Taxi-Gap Barrier by 92d Bomb Wing. This barrier was designed to provide additional security for the alert aircraft while on the flight line. Again, Lieutenant General Light was on hand to view the test and subsequently ordered further similar tests for other 15 Air Force units.

In January 1985 the Model Installation Program was instituted at Fairchild AFB. Several other bases in the Air Force also participated in the program which was designed to accomplish several goals including reducing decision making to the lowest levels, and saving dollars whenever or wherever possible.

1985 also had its share of inspections, evaluations and exercises. The Wing participated in another successful World Wide exercise termed Global Shield '85. The Inspector General, Headquarters SAC team visited the base and found, overall, the Wing to be executing its mission in an Excellent manner.

In September 1985, the first "H" model B-52 arrived at the base. This marked a new era in the Wing's operational history. This newest, most modern B-52 initiated a transition to replace older "G" model aircraft.

Today, the Wing is involved in an ever-ready posture to respond to any foreign aggression, should the need arise. Colonel Meier said his number-one priorities are mission accomplishment and taking care of people. The mission readiness includes the numerous special training missions, such as the sea surveillance BUSY OBSERVER and simulated combat missions called RED and MAPLE FLAG. Also, in an attempt to keep the men and women of the Wing proficient, the 92d participates in the SAC-wide BOMB-NAV competition held once a year Barksdale AFB, Louisiana.

The 92d Bombardment Wing has added greatly to the history of the United States Air Force, through its combat performances, peacetime leadership, and constant readiness. Unknown are the challenges of the future, but you can be sure the people and aircraft of the 92d Bombardment Wing will be more than equal to the challenge.



## CHAPTER XII

### THE BASE AND THE COMMUNITY

The relationship between the Spokane Army Depot, later Fairchild Air Force Base, and the city of Spokane has been economic and social. In the beginning, the city had 10,000 of its citizens working for and with the military, thus a dual relationship was unavoidable. Although the war itself was responsible for the military morale of the community, the Spokane Chamber of Commerce made special effort to involve the city in supporting the military. Spokane's assistance in providing recreational facilities and activities for the service men at Geiger and the other military installations encompassed a variety of actions. There were many social gatherings during the war which were sponsored by civilian groups in addition to the local support for the Spokane chapter of the USO. In March 1941, the civic leaders planned and began construction of a canteen in Spokane. After opening in July, this establishment was used to provide a place for leisure away from the military installations. The Y.W.C.A. sponsored dances at the canteen and as many as 60 young ladies from the organization became dancing partners for the single soldiers.<sup>85</sup> The canteen also offered a variety of sports activity and film presentations. The city was heartily encouraged to participate in the canteen in order to provide the best leisure time possible for the town's servicemen.

A month after the canteen opened, the city held a two-day celebration in tribute to the Army. A large parade was conducted in downtown Spokane on April 7th and an open house was held at Ft. George Wright and Felts Field.<sup>86</sup> There were also dances held at various locations throughout the city. The celebration marked the unofficial opening of Geiger Field, which was officially opened in July when the first B-17 of the 39th Bombardment Group was landed at the field by Colonel Burt, the Group Commander.<sup>87</sup> The city may well have been celebrating the beginning of a new life for itself, a life with its financial burdens being lifted by the increased military presence in Spokane.

Another open house was held for Geiger in December. This marked the completion of all field construction and the acceptance of the base by the government. There were only 500 visitors to the field that day, perhaps because the excitement of the depot had overshadowed the debut. The depot had a number of open houses during its history. The first view of the depot was for the press, when journalists from around the region were given a guided tour of the installation in December 1942.<sup>88</sup> Perhaps the largest and most impressive open house occurred in 1948 when the installation celebrated its newest name, Spokane Air Force Base. Conservative estimates place the civilian attendance at 120,000 for the

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85 Spokane Daily Chronicle, March 20, 1941, p. 3, col. 2.

86 Ibid., April 7, 1941, p. 3, col. 2.

87 Ibid., July 14, 1941, p. 1, col. 5.

88 Spokesman Reveiw, December 1, 1942, p. 7, col. 1.

19 September event. There were 42,000 automobiles parked on the base and backed up on Highway 2, all the way back to Spokane. The bountiful attendance was probably the result of substantial advertising. There were 34 window displays in downtown shops that heralded the fete. In addition, the base gained approval from the Air Force and local authorities to drop leaflets from aircraft over surrounding communities. The open house lasted only six hours, but before it had ended, the nursery accounted for over 200 diaper changes.<sup>89</sup> The open house of today has become an annual spring occurrence. Activities include Drum and Bugle Corps marching competition which is sponsored by the Reserve Officer Training Corp(ROTC) units from schools throughout the Northwest, model aircraft flying, aircraft exhibits and air demonstrations which include the Air Force Thunderbirds. The civilian attendance at these Spring events is uniformly over 75,800 and it demonstrates the continuing good will that exists between the base and the city.

The chamber of commerce paid particular attention to the military during the war by hosting numerous luncheons, where the guest speaker was a commander of a local unit or a visiting military official. The chamber's committee for military affairs kept vitally interested in the activities of the military organizations within the city and acted as a liaison between the military and the chamber, and hence, the rest of the city. It was not unusual for the chairman of the committee to be a high ranking officer in a local National Guard unit during the late 1940s.<sup>90</sup> This committee learned of the needs of the servicemen for recreation and attempted to satisfy them by working with the chamber and other civic organizations. The Military Affairs Committee recognized the need to beautify the depot in April 1943 and suggested a landscaping project be initiated. The chamber agreed with the suggestion and after consulting with government officials to obtain some recommendations for planting to achieve dust control, it called for donations of trees and shrubbery to be used in landscaping the site. The city engaged the aid of forestry experts to plan the best vegetation location and determine care required to sustain growth. Over 8,000 trees and shrubs were donated by the citizens of Spokane. The soldiers performed the work during their off time.<sup>91</sup> By the end of 1943 the depot site was no longer the barren, dusty, unattractive workcenter it had been. Even today, the grounds personnel of the base maintain a tree farm, the resources of which are used to continually enhance the beauty of Fairchild.

The Military Affairs Committee played a pivotal role during the late 1940s by supporting a number of Army and Air National Guard units in the Spokane area. The accomplishments of this committee included the addition of several new units to the 161st Infantry Regiment. Also the creation of the headquarters for the 160th Wing of the Washington Air Guard at Geiger

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89 "Spokane Affairs," 19 September 1948, p. 2, Col 1

90 "Spokane Affairs," 9 February 1948, p. 4, Col 1

91 Spokesman Review, 1 April 1943, p.3, Col 5, 17 October 1943,

and the obtaining of \$10,000 from state funds to construct a drill hall and technical laboratory for the expanded 60th Wing operations.92

The interest for the well-being of the servicemen on the part of the chamber of commerce did not end when the war did. When the USO of Spokane closed in 1950, the chamber again combined efforts with the Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A. to provide entertainment for servicemen on leave. The canteen was maintained for this purpose, and the growth of the city provided increased entertainment in the form of movie houses, theaters and other establishments.93 As the Air Force began to furnish increased recreational activities of its own such as hobby shops, libraries, theaters, etc., the demand for civic supported functions lessened. The permanency of the base also helped to reduce the need for specific recreational support from the city. The servicemen became town citizens and began to enjoy what the city and surrounding regions had to offer. With the war over, there was more time to discover what was available and more time to enjoy it.

Even with the decrease of the civic-provided leisure pastimes, the chamber has not ceased to support the servicemen. The chamber helped to organize the civilian business support for Fairchild's "Airman of the Month" program. Each month, one lower ranking airman is recognized for superior performance of duty and emulatory personal conduct. The program began in 1954 and continues to bind the base and town in a cooperative effort to enhance the life of the enlisted.94 The chamber of commerce has occasionally hosted the military community to a variety of other special events. They have offered free tickets to Spokane's Civic Theater performances and supported a special free admission day for service personnel at Playfair, the local race track.

Another excellent example of the chamber's and the city's interest in the good will and morale of the military community was the donation of 25 acres of land that borders the Clear Lake resort which lies approximately 10 miles west of Fairchild. The chamber of commerce purchased the land in 1967 for \$25,000 and leased it to the base for use as a recreational park. In 1970 the land was donated to the government. This gift had developed into an attractive summer resort that includes swimming, fishing and water-skiing facilities, plus cabins for overnight lodging. The Clear Lake resort has become a favorite recreational area for the base personnel during the summer months.95

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92 "Spokane Affairs", 1947 Annual Report; 1948 Annual Report; February 9, 1948, p. 2, col. 2; February 27, 1950, p. 4, col. 2.

93 Ibid., February 20, 1950, p. 2, col. 1.

94 Colonel Hughes, Commander, Fairchild AFB, to Spokane Chamber of Commerce, August 16, 1954, Chamber of Commerce files

95 Robert Seamans, Department of the Air Force, to James McColdrick, President, Spokane Chamber of Commerce, June 26, 1970, Chamber of Commerce files.

In the last several years further examples of the excellent base-community relationship are readily available. During the late 1970's various significant events occurred to further cement the positive relationship. In 1977, the Spokane County Sheriff's SWAT team assisted Base Security Police in a sniper incident on base. Also, in 1977, during a basketball game at Gonzaga University's Kennedy Pavilion, between Gonzaga and the U. S. Air Force Academy, the Security Police canine care gave a demonstration, and several airmen and civilians were honored. Its a matter of fact, part of the proceeds of the ticket sales were donated by Gonzaga University to the Air Force Assistance Fund.

Two incidents regarding civilian aircraft in 1977 demonstrated the continuing relationship between the base and the community. When a Northwest Airlines aircraft broke through the surface of a taxiway in Missoula, Montana (some 200 miles east of Spokane) a team from Fairchild went to help civilian workers. These airmen worked 33 hours to successfully remove it with only minor damage to the aircraft. Due to inclement weather at Spokane International Airport, another Northwest Airlines plane was circling the area in August 1977, when it declared an inflight emergency due to a seriously ill passenger. The pilot of the aircraft was allowed to land at Fairchild and the 81 year old woman passenger, suffering from a heart attack, was met by Base Hospital attendants, transported to the Base Hospital, and eventually transported to Sacred Heart Medical Center in Spokane, by base personnel.

During the next two years several significant events continued to illustrate this outstanding relationship between the Air Force and the local community: President Jimmy Carter visited Fairchild and Spokane in 1978 to hold a town meeting; General Richard Ellis, Commander in Chief, Strategic Air Command, arrived in the Fall of 1978 to speak at the Spokane Club; and in April 1979 an ABC TV film crew visited Fairchild to film Security Police Forces responding to a simulated terrorist attack, as background footage for General Ellis' appearance on ABC's "Good Morning America".

During the 1980's this exceptionally good relationship between the base and the civilian community continued. For example, in 1981 Base Fire Department personnel helped instruct potential fire fighters in Coeur d' Alene, Kellogg, and Worley, Idaho, on aircraft crash fire fighting and responded to a mutual aid fire 2 miles off-base on a private residence, at the request of local fire officials. Also, in 1981, two air traffic controllers from, the 2039th Communications Squadron went to Houston International Airport to augment forces there due to a nationwide controller's strike.

In 1982 this relationship continued to flourish as SAC Commander-in-Chief, General Bennie L. Davis was in Spokane to serve as Grand Marshal for Spokane's Annual Lilac Festival, an event that continues to recognize the military's importance to the nation and the Spokane community. Also, a film crew from KHQ-TV in Spokane made a tour of Fairchild's altitude chamber and simulator facility for a feature on the station's "PM Magazine". Finally on 16 September 1982, Mayor James Chase and members of the Spokane Chamber of Commerce joined with the 92d Bomb Wing Commander, Col James Allen to christen a B-52 as the "City of Spokane" to honor the city of Spokane and the only 92nd Bomb Wing B-52 shot down over North Vietnam.

The relationship between the base and the civilian community was best illustrated in 1983 when the Air Force and Fairchild Air Force Base undertook to move operation to the Grant County Airport near Moses Lake, WA due to runway repairs at the base. "Busy Moses," as it was dubbed, could not have been successful without the full cooperation of Air Force personnel and Grant County officials and the citizens of Moses Lake. The three month deployment was very highly successful, a tribute to the excellent working relationship. Also, in late 1983, Colonel Allen, Wing Commander, took his case to the community for the "Year 2000 Plan" to revitalize the base. He did so by the public service cooperation of KXLY-TV in Spokane. A thirty-minute program on the station gave the Air Force a chance to explain the needs and concerns of the Air Force and Fairchild to update and revitalize the aging facilities of the base and how this plan would benefit area citizens and business persons. 96

In 1984 several area leaders, national politicians, and officials regularly visited the base to view new construction and be briefed on future plans. Included in these visits was Congressman Thomas Foley in July 1984 to dedicate the new Tanker Alert Facility, the first major construction of its type in over 20 years at Fairchild.

The 1984 Spokane Lilac Parade hosted Army Lt Gen Donald C. McKenzie as its Grand Marshal in keeping with the tradition of honoring military neighbors and friends. As part of General McKenzie's visit he invited civic leaders to tour his facility at NORAD headquarters near Colorado Springs, Colorado. So, in January 1985, 38 civic leaders embarked on an Air Force tanker at Fairchild for a 3-day trip to NORAD and SAC headquarters as guests of the Air Force. They toured the facilities and received numerous briefings from their hosts. When the leaders returned to Spokane their positive comments reflected, again, the mutual respect and admiration of the local community and the military in the area.

The base continues to hold significant events, to which community leaders are invited. The recent visit of the "Tops in Blue" at the Spokane Opera House illustrates this excellent relationship between Spokane and Fairchild Air Force Base. The Spokane Lilac Festival again, continues to honor the military, sustaining a relationship of more than 40 years that is warm and mutually beneficial.

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96 History of 92nd Bomb Wing, various volumes found in the Office of History, SAC, 1977-1984



## CHAPTER XIII CONCLUSION

The size of the military community of Spokane continued to decline very gradually during the 1960s and 1970s. Although the military population at Fairchild swelled slightly during the Vietnam conflict, other organizations in and around the city sustained reductions. The federal government sold the majority of the property and buildings that composed Fort George Wright to the Society of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary in 1961, after the Air Guard Headquarters was relocated to Everett. The Army continues to maintain National Guard equipment on part of the property, but most of the 70 year old structures house the Holy Names Center for Education and Development and privately owned Heritage College.<sup>97</sup> More recently, the Air National Guard unit stationed at Geiger Field has been relocated to Fairchild.<sup>98</sup> This move, which was accomplished in 1976, has all but removed the military activity from Geiger. There remains today a few minor Air Guard operations but the former base now serves as an Industrial Park.

Today, Fairchild holds the prominent position of the largest military population in the Spokane area. It earned a total of \$92,656,520 in wages during fiscal year 1984, while the 900 civilian employees earned \$26,570,844 during the same period. The base spent \$19,800,000 on locally supplied services, supplies and equipment. This was in addition to over \$3,600,000 spent on utilities for government housing which is located in five separate areas and includes 7100 units. When these figures are added and then multiplied by a standard conversion factor of 2.522 which accounts for the circulation of the money before it leaves the community, Fairchild is responsible for introducing \$489,379,520 into the Spokane economy on a yearly basis.<sup>99</sup> This sum includes some \$59 million in retirement salaries for retirees in the Spokane area and \$1.3 million in money paid to the public school system for Blair Elementary School located on Fairchild. In addition, an estimated 3,662 jobs were created in the Spokane area due to the economic impact of dollars spent.

The economic impact of the military organizations at Fairchild alone has quadrupled since the construction and high employment days of the Spokane Army Air Depot. Inflation has certainly played a role in the escalation, but it does not account for the 400 percent increase. Nor can the number of employees be a major factor. Since 1943, civilian employment had dropped 90 percent, while the payroll has only decreased by 60 percent. The increase in the amount and sophisticated equipment needed to perform the mission of the base has greatly affected the economics of operating the installation. The benefactor of this progress in technology has been the nation as a whole, because of a strengthened defense, and the local community, which supplies the needed resources to maintain operation. Spokane has profited much from its association with the military. The relationship of the two parties has progressed from the construction and high employment era to the current strong, permanent social and economic contract.

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<sup>97</sup> Quickclaim Deed, Fort George Wright to Holy Names Society, August 28, 1961, Corps of Engineers, Real Estate, Forrestal Building

<sup>98</sup> Historical Files of the 92d Bomb Wing, 92d Bomb Wing History Office, Fairchild AFB, Spokane, Washington

<sup>99</sup> Economic Resource Impact Statement, September 1984, 92d Bomb Wing



The installation itself has undergone continuous change during its 40 year history. The million dollar engine test building where records were set for the number of engine overhauls is quiet now. The test cells are empty and the only activity is below ground in the operations section, or an occasional pre-flight briefing in the first floor conference room. The 12 acre maintenance hangar holds only four B-52 or KC-135 aircraft at a time today; quite a reduction from the 20 B-17s that would progress through the structure in assembly line fashion in 1944. There is only one runway now. It covers the three that were used during the war. From the air, the remnant of one of the earlier runways can be seen as a small, peculiar, triangular appendage to its massive successor. The B-52s and KC-135s are larger and noiser than their predecessors, especially those of the 1940s. There are fewer civilian workers, more sophisticated weapon systems and different missions. But despite all of the changes, the base is still there. It has grown in size and scope of operation, and because of the warm, healthy relationship between the base and the chamber of commerce, it remains a vital part of the social and economic life of the city of Spokane.

## AWARDS AND HONORS

GIVEN TO THE 92D BOMBARDMENT WING

## WORLD WAR II BATTLE HONORS

Antisubmarining  
Normandy  
Northern France  
Ardennes - Alsace  
Central Europe  
Rhineland  
Air Offensive, Europe

## UNITED NATIONS CAMPAIGN (KOREA)

United Nations Defensive, June - September 1950  
United Nations Offensive, September - November 1950  
Korean Presidential Citation, 1950

## DISTINGUISHED UNIT CITATIONS

For Action Over Germany, 11 January 1944  
For Action Over Merseburg, Germany, 11 September 1944

## UNITED STATES AIR FORCE AWARDS

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award (AFOUA)	22 August - 11 September 1953
AFOUA w/First Oak Leaf Cluster	3 March - 6 December 1959
AFOUA w/Second Oak Leaf Cluster	1 January - 31 March 1962
AFOUA w/Third Oak Leaf Cluster	1 July 1967 - 30 June 1968
AFOUA w/Fourth Oak Leaf Cluster	1 July 1969 - 30 June 1970
AFOUA w/Fifth Oak Leaf Cluster	1 July 1976 - 30 June 1977

WING COMMANDERS OF THE92D BOMBARDMENT WING

<u>GRADE/NAME</u>	<u>EFFECTIVE</u>
Col Albert J. Shower	Jul 1947
Col Claude E. Putnam	Jun 1950
Col David Wade	Feb 1951
Col James V. Edmundson	Nov 1952
Col Jack J. Catton	Mar 1954
Col Ronald A. Campbell	Jul 1955
Col Clarence A. Neely	Aug 1956
Col Donald E. Hillman	Jan 1958
Col Lester R. Miller	May 1959
Col David I. Liebman	Aug 1962
Col Edison F. Arnold	Jun 1964
Col Alex W. Talmant	Mar 1966
Col Woodrow A. Abbot	Jun 1967
Col Robert H. Gaughan	Jan 1968
Col Frank W. Elliott, Jr.	Jul 1969
Col Richard F. Heller, Jr.	Jan 1970
Col Clyde R. Denniston, Jr.	Jan 1971
Col Donald L. Keplinger	Jun 1971
Col Martin C. Fulcher	Apr 1973
Col Louis C. Buckman	Feb 1974
Col John R. Steward Jr.	Jun 1975
Col Philip A. Brennan	Apr 1976
Col Alan H. Lancaster	Jun 1977

(Continued)

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GRADE/NAME

EFFECTIVE

Col John A. Shaud

Jun 1978

Col David R. Moore

Jun 1980

Col Charles A. May, Jr.

Jul 1981

Col John R. Allen, Jr.

Aug 1982

Col James W. Meier

Aug 1984

LIST OF STATIONS

Barksdale Field, Louisiana	1 Mar 1942 - 16 Mar 1942
MacDill Field, Florida	16 Mar 1942 - 17 May 1942
Bradenton Field, Florida	19 May 1942 - 19 Jun 1942
Westover Field, Massachusetts	20 Jun 1942 - 28 Jun 1942
Dow Field, Maine	29 Jun 1942 - 25 Aug 1942
Prestwick, Scotland	26 Aug 1942 - 28 Aug 1942
Bovingdon, England	29 Aug 1942 - 3 Jan 1943
Alconbury, England	4 Jan 1943 - 15 Jun 1945
Istres Field, France	15 Jun 1945 - 28 Feb 1946
Fort Worth Field, Texas	4 Aug 1946 - 14 Jul 1947
Spokane AFB, Washington	15 Jul 1947 - 4 Jul 1950
Yokota AB, Japan (Forward Operating Location)	6 Jul 1950 - 25 Oct 1950
Spokane AFB, Washington	26 Oct 1950 - 24 Nov 1950
Fairchild AFB, Washington	4 Nov 1950 - Present
Grant County Airport, Moses Lake, Washington (Forward Operating Location)	7 May 1983 - 6 Aug 1983

## DESIGNATIONS

92d Bombardment Group (Heavy)	1 March 1942
92d Bombardment Wing (Heavy)	October 1950
92d Strategic Aerospace Wing	March 1962
92d Bombardment Wing (Heavy)	1 July 1972

## TYPES OF AIRCRAFT

B-17 "Flying Fortress" . . . . .	1 March 1942 - 28 February 1946
B-29 "Superfortress" . . . . .	4 August 1946 - 28 July 1951
B-36 "Peacemakers" . . . . .	29 July 1951 - 25 March 1957
B-52 "Stratofortress". . . . .	26 March 1957 - To Present
KB-29 "Tanker" . . . . .	13 September 1957 - 20 February 1959
KC-135 "Stratotanker". . . . .	21 February 1959 - To Present



### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## B-17G "FLYING FORTRESS"

### SPECIFICATIONS

Powerplant: 4 X 1,200hp Wright Engines  
F-1820-97 Radial

#### Dimensions:

Span: 103' 9"  
Length: 74' 4"  
Height: 19' 1"  
Wing Area: 1,420 sq ft

#### Weights:

Empty: 36,135lbs  
With Avg Bomb Load: 65,500lbs

#### Performance:

Maximum Speed: 288mph at 25,000ft  
Service Ceiling: 35,600ft  
Range: 2,000 miles with 6,000lb bombs

#### Armament:

13 .50caliber Machine Guns  
17,600lbs bombs

Crew: 10

The B-17G was the mainstay of the bomber force during World War II. The Army Air Force dropped over a million tons of bombs during the war over enemy targets in both the European and Pacific Theaters.



A B-17 receives flak as it approaches its target. The photo was taken by a crewmember from another 92d Bomb Group aircraft.



A huge explosion reaches skyward from the area near the I.G. Farbendustrie chemical plant in the river front district at Ludwigshafen, Germany as one of the attacking B-17s of the 92d bombers overhead on 27 May 1944. As a result of the bombing mission, fires spread unhampered over a large area causing extensive damage. The smoke to the right is from hits scored on a nearby marshalling yard. Note the top gun turret, just above the cockpit. The guns were turned to meet enemy fighters, always present to ward off allied bombers on missions such as this one.



*Enroute to their targets from their bases in England, 92d Bomb Group B-17s leave contrails in the oxygen sparse atmosphere.*

## B-29 "SUPERFORTRESS"

### SPECIFICATIONS

Powerplant: 4 X 2,200hp Wright Engines  
F-3350-23-41 or 57 radial engines

Dimensions:

Span: 141' 3"  
Length: 99' 0"  
Height: 29' 7"  
Wing Area: 1,736 sq ft

Weight:

Empty: 71,360lbs  
W/Payload: 141,100lbs

Performance:

Max Speed: 358mph at 25,000ft  
Service Ceiling: 31,850ft  
Range: 4,100 miles with 16,000lbs bombs

Armament: 10 .50 caliber machine guns  
1 20mm cannon  
20,000lbs bombs

Crew: 10

The B-29 was the primary bomber used by the newly formed Air Force during the Korean Conflict.





The crew of the B-29 "United Notions." The crew was stationed at Yokota AB, Japan during the 92d Bomb Groups involvement in the Korean Conflict. Note the interesting "nose art" on the aircraft. Top row: (left to right) Aircraft Commander, 1Lt J. Patrick, Copilot, 1Lt J. Murphy, Navigator, 1Lt J. Wood, Bombardier Capt J. Cole, Radar/Navigator Maj H. Chatfield. Bottom row: (l to r) Flight Engineer MSgt J. Goslin, Radio Operator SSgt R. Doty, 580 Top Gunner SSgt A. Conder, 612 Right Gunner Sgt E. Hodsdon, 612 Left Gunner SSgt W. Ayres, Tail Gunner 612 P. Lenart.



*A 92d Bomb Group B-29 drops its payload on an enemy stronghold over North Korea.*



The KB-29 Tanker "Ma" and its receiver, "Pa", a B-29 "Superfortress". During the fifties, B-29s were converted into tankers, the first basic prototype of tankers which eventually led to the KC-135 "Stratotanker". Basically, the refueling pod was the tail gunners area (note the window in the rear of the plane) converted into a makeshift boom operators functional area. From the window the boom operator could visually observe the refueling as it progressed. Fuel storage cells within the bomb bay, called bladders, were installed to hold fuel.

B-36 "PEACEMAKER"

SPECIFICATIONS

Powerplant: 6 X 3,500hp Pratt and Whitney R-4360  
41 radial engines and 4 X 5,200lb thrust General Electric  
J47-GE-19 Turbojets

Dimensions:

Wing Span: 230' 0"  
Length: 162' 1"  
Height: 46' 8"  
Wing Area: 4,772 sq ft

Weight:

Empty: 158,843lbs  
W/payload: 357,500lbs

Performance:

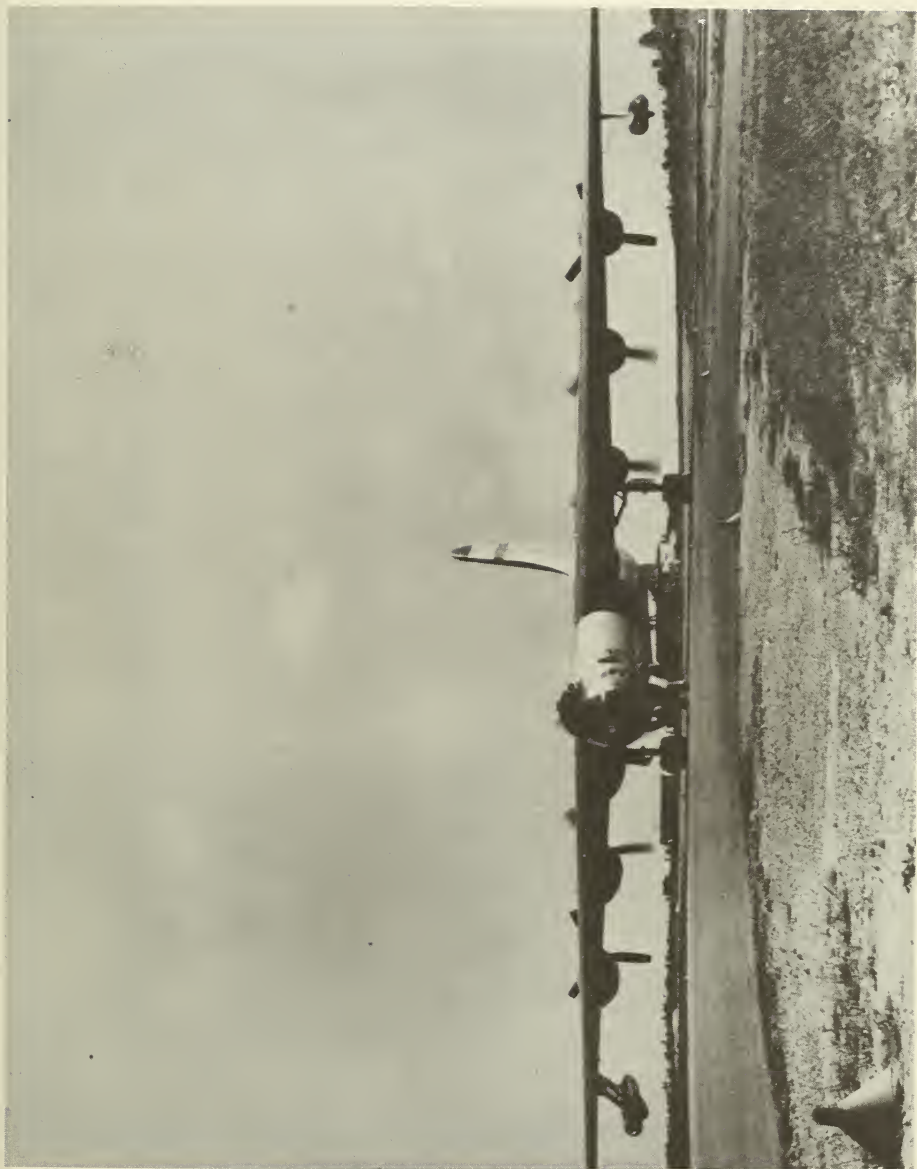
Maximum Speed: 439mph at 32,120 ft  
Service Ceiling: 45,200 ft  
Range: 7,500 miles

Armament: 6 twin 20mm cannons  
86,000lbs bombs

Crew: 15

The B-36 "Peacemaker" superseded the B-29 as SAC's primary bomber during the 1950's, and provided the Air Force with a long-range dependable aircraft. Although the B-36 never dropped a bomb or fired its weapons in anger against an enemy target, it did serve as a threat to any foreign aggression as the mainstay of SAC's mission of deterrence.







B-29 Flying over Korea





Crews remove snow from their aircraft shortly after a snowfall. What was so unique about the B-36 was its engines. The engines were basically backwards, and at the end of each wing were a pair of jet engines to aid the aircraft during takeoff. Note how the aircraft miniaturizes the crews clearing the snow and dwarfs the vehicles surrounding aircraft.



ATLAS INCONTINENTAL BALLISTIC MISSILE  
(ICBM)

SPECIFICATIONS

Range: 5,5000 miles (estimated)

Launch design: vertical takeoff

Dimensions:

Length: 75ft

Diameter: 10ft

Airframe: One and one-half stage

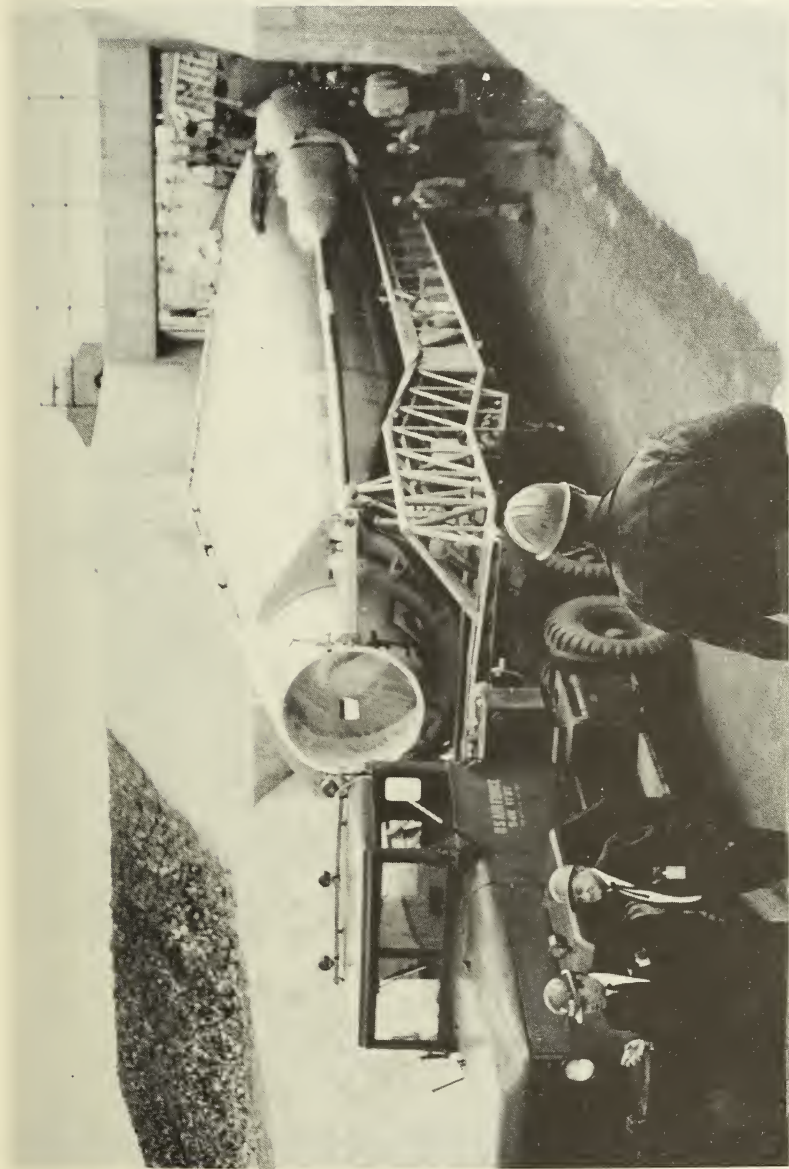
Fuel: Liquid (kerosene/liquid oxygen)

Engines: General Electric (2)

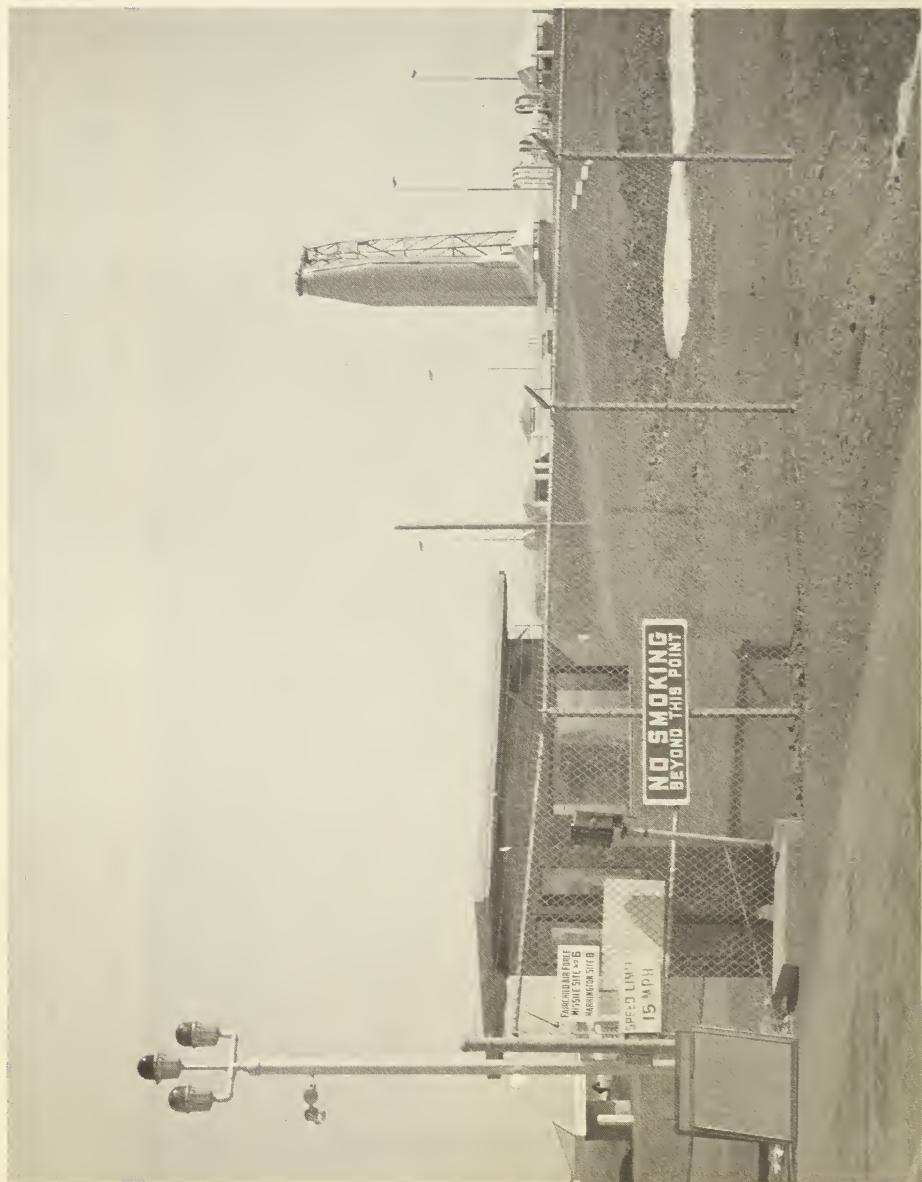
Thrust: 150,000lbs a piece

Launch weight: 200,000lbs

Guidance: Inertial (self guided)

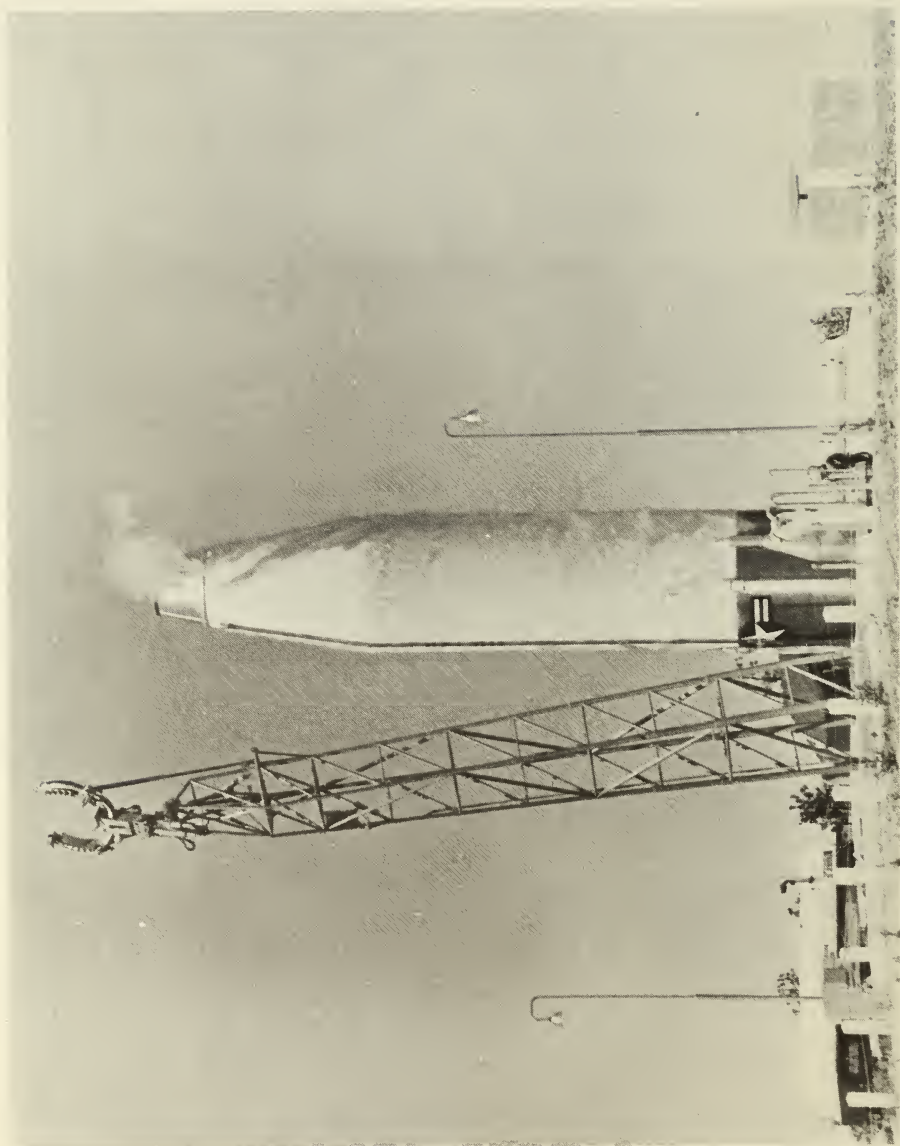


A 92BNW missile crew from the 567th Strategic Missile Squadron (567SMS) prepare to lower an Atlas into its silo near Davenport, Washington. The Atlas was the Air Force's first guided ballistic missile and performed flawlessly during its years of operation. Upon its retirement, it was superseded by the Titan Missile and later on the Minuteman Missile line. The Atlas booster was used to launch John Glenn, one of America's first astronauts to orbit the earth during NASA's Mercury space program.

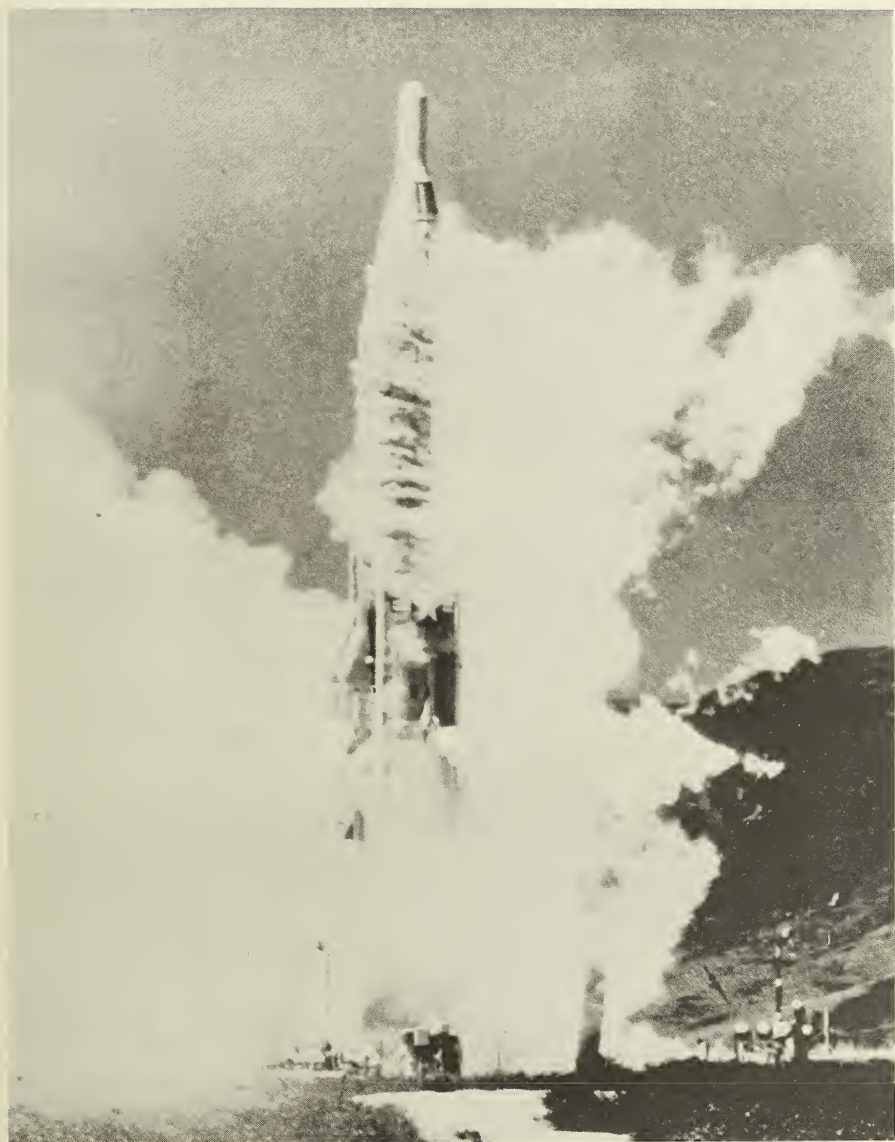












B-52G "STRATOFORTRESS"

SPECIFICATIONS

Takeoff weight - more than 488,000 pounds

Speed - 650 miles per hour

Number of engines - 8

Thrust per engine - more than 10,000 pounds

Range - more than 7,500 miles

Altitude - above 50,000 feet

Armament - four 50-caliber machine guns

Bomb load - more than 20,000 pounds

Dimensions:

Span - 185ft

Sweepback - 35 degrees

Length - 160ft

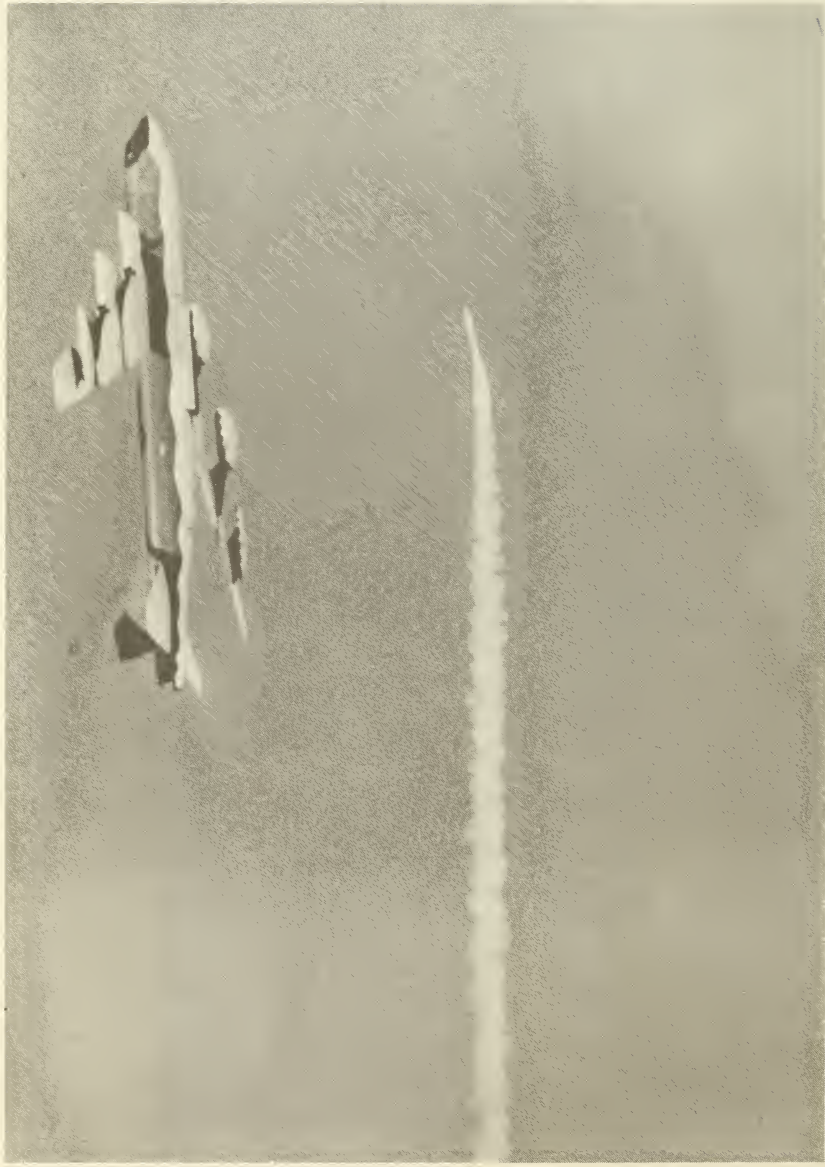
Height - 40ft

Status - Operational

The B-52 replaced the B-36 as SAC's primary strategic bomber and Fairchild received it's first in October of 1957. The B-52 has since that time been on 24-hour-a-day alert at United States and overseas bases.



Two maintenance workers prepare to upload a Hound Dog Missile aboard a B-52D. The first Hound Dog arrived at Fairchild aboard a C-124 transport aircraft on 21 November 1962. The AGM-77 was a highly elusive miniature supersonic missile with a self contained navigational system, and was capable of elusive maneuvers to penetrate enemy defenses to reach its target. Another little interest item was the missile could also be programmed to head for a false target then made to take an abrupt turn and head for its programmed target.



A B-52 fires a Short Range Attack Missile (SRAM) for test purposes. The SRAM eventually replaced the Hound Dog and other missile systems during the 1974-75 time period. The SRAM provided SAC crews with a supersonic inertially guided missile of near pin-point accuracy, and weighed substantially less than any of its predecessors.





Armed with thousands of pounds of bombs, B-52 "Stratofortresses" reached areas previously considered a sanctuary for enemy ground troops. Dispatching their bombs from extremely high altitudes and unseen by the enemy, the B-52s constantly kept the enemy forces on the move both day and night with their precision bombing. This was a typical mission many of the 92BMW crews flew and were one of the key factors to the successes of such campaigns as A-Shau Valley and were instrumental in defeating the Viet Cong after severely brutalizing the U.S. Marines at Khe Sanh.



A Strategic Air Command (SAC) B-52 Stratofortress releases a string of 750-pound bombs over a coastal target. Flying daily strikes, SAC crewmen harassed Viet Cong Forces from the coast to the mountainous highlands in the Republic of Vietnam. October 1965.



A B-52 aircraft on a bombing mission over South Vietnam refuels from a KC-135 tanker. 1967





SYMBOL OF SECURITY -- Shown releasing a conventional bomb load, this B-52 with serial number 50100 is now on permanent display in Arc Light Park on Guam as a memorial to airmen who flew, fought and died in the Vietnam Conflict. B-52s entered the USAF inventory in 1955. (U.S. Air Force Photo)



*Top photo: A B-52G prepares to take off during the flying phase of an Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI). Bottom Left: A B-52D drops bombs on Viet Cong strongholds over South Vietnam.*





The B-52 of the 1980s, guardian of peace. Today, the B-52 often older than the men that fly or work on it. Built in the mid-'50s and scheduled to be replaced sometime in the mid to late '60s, SAC's B-52 force has more than served its purpose, some of the aircraft reaching their thirtieth birthday with over 100,000 hours flying time on their airframes. Note the two pods beneath the aircraft, just behind the nose. When opened, allow the pilot and copilot to see the runway and area surrounding the aircraft with the windows covered to keep the crew from becoming blinded during a nuclear blast.

KC-135 "STRATOTANKER"

SPECIFICATIONS

Takeoff Weight: 297,000lbs

Type: Heavy Tanker-Transport

Weight:

Empty: 98,564lbs

Normal: 245,000lbs

Maximum: 297,000lbs

Performance:

Maximum speed: 624mph at 25,000ft

Cruising speed: 592mph at 35,000ft

Radius of action: 1,150 miles

Initial rate of climb: 21.6ft/sec

Dimensions:

Wing span: 130' 10"

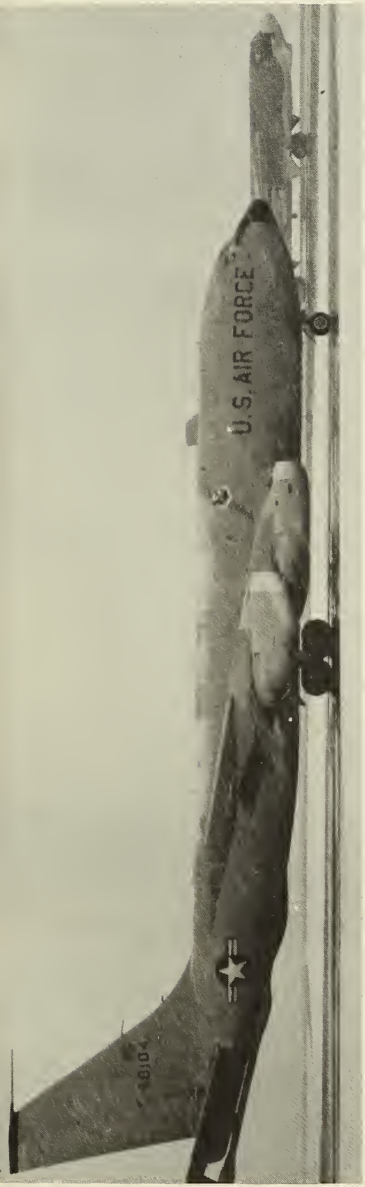
Length: 136' 3"

Height: 38' 4"



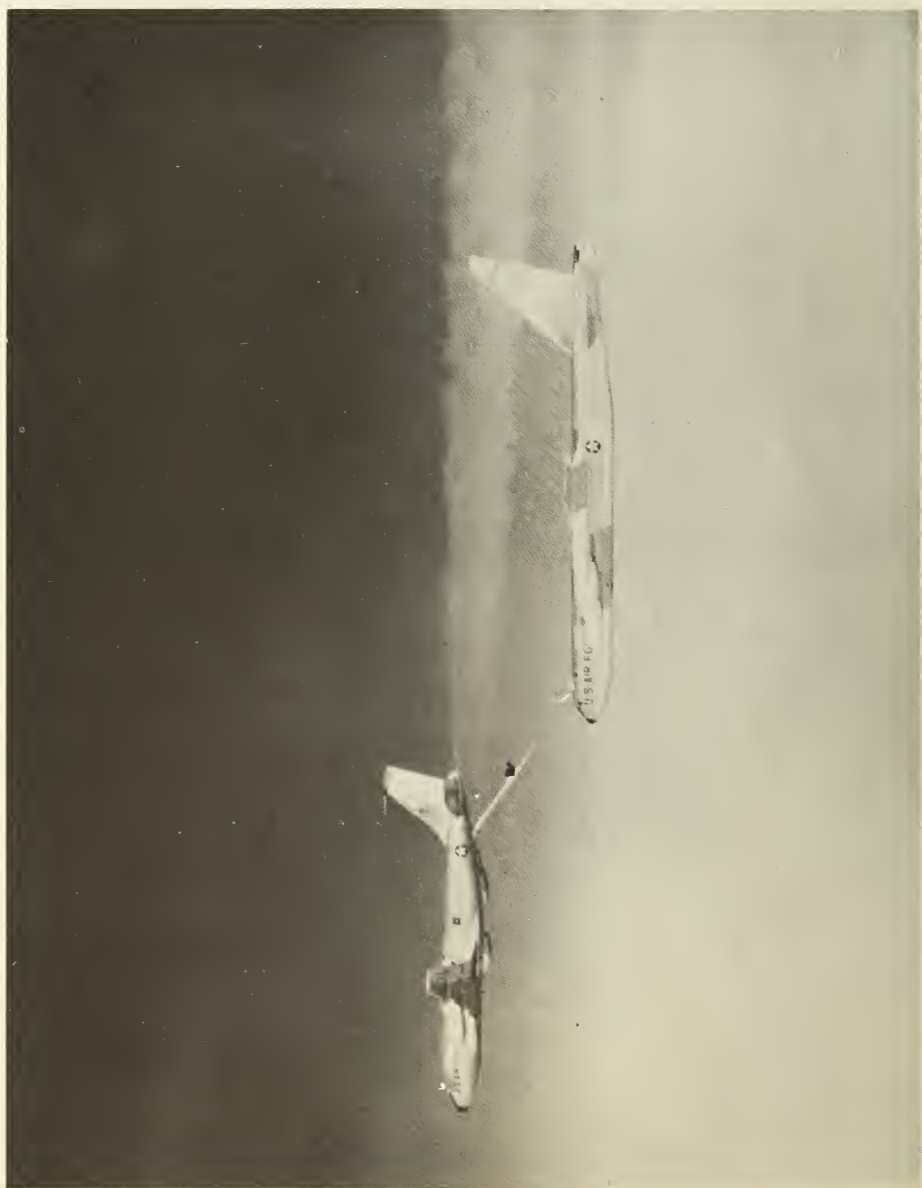
KC-135 STRATOTANKER -- As the single manager for Air Force aerial refueling operations, SAC operates a fleet of nearly 600 KC-135 tankers. Besides its own aircraft, SAC refuels aircraft of Pacific Air Forces, Tactical Air Command, Aerospace Defense Command, and U.S. Navy and NATO aircraft. (U.S. Air Force Photo)

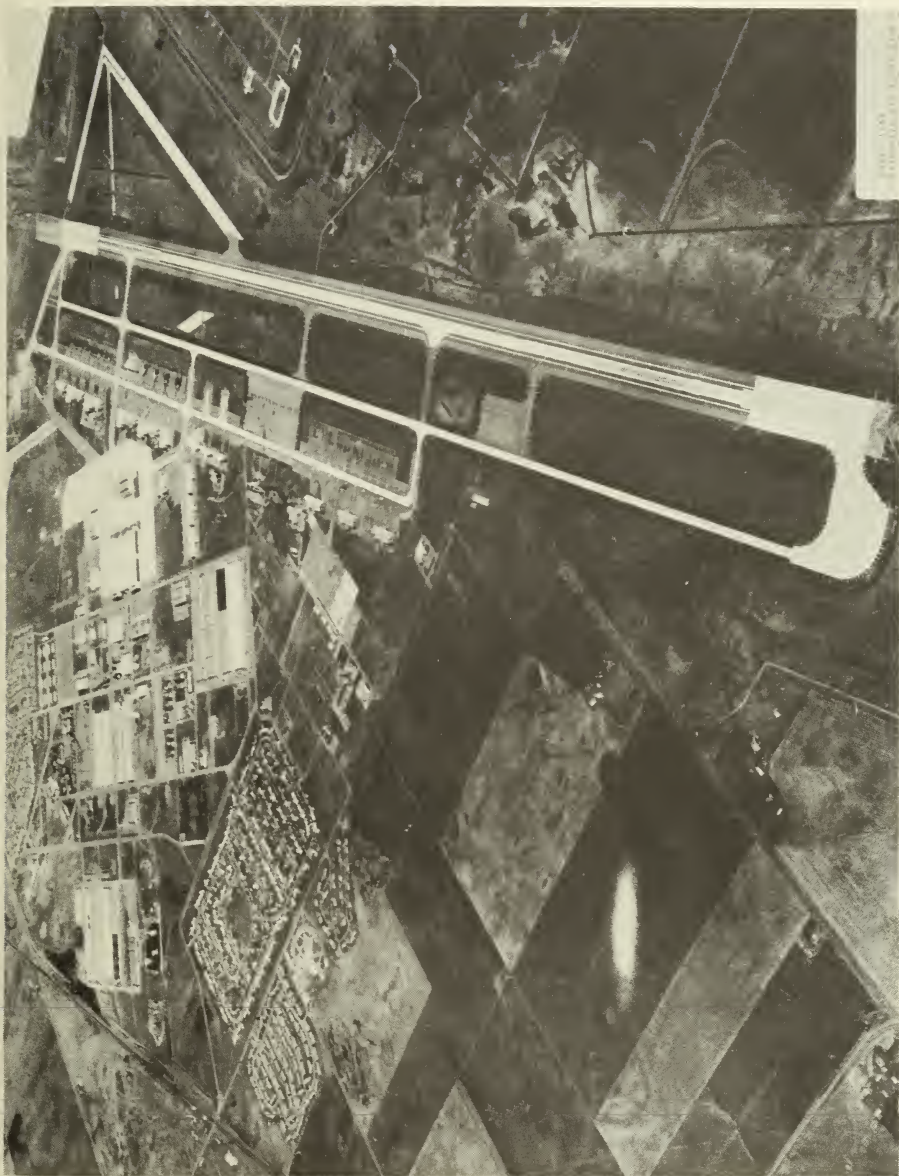




Top: A KC-135 Tanker waits its turn for takeoff during an ORI. In all probability, it will meet with the B-52 in the background for mid-air refueling. Bottom: A 928MW Tanker lifts off the Fairchild runway on a training mission. Note the darker exhaust coming from the engines. The darker exhaust is a result from using water, mixed with fuel, for better thrust.







Fairchild A.F.B., March 1969



General's (Left to right) Fairchild, LeMay, and Power.



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